

**Memories  
and  
Poems  
of  
Joan Emerson**



Go file  
with love  
Joan Emerson

Memories and Poems of Joan Emerson



By Joan Emerson

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First published in Great Britain in 2021 by Joan Emerson

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Printed by CZ Design and Print, Unit 3, Southmill Trading Centre, Bishop's Stortford CM23 3DY  
Tel: 01279 657769

Remembering Haroldene Children's Home, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex.

During and after the War I worked at Stansted Mountfitchet 3-31/2 miles from Bishop's Stortford.

I cycled with quite a few people from Bishop's Stortford every morning and got home about 6.30 p.m. Quite a long day. I worked at High Lane factory Edistran. We made T.V valves as they used to be before printed circuits etc. We used to put the elements into the big bulbs that in those days you put in the TVs. In Stansted there was a children's home called Haroldene, overlooking the recreation play area, off a side road on top off Chapel Hill. There were 25-30 children at the Home. They all went to the village school and great pains were taken to see that they were not all dressed alike, as one little girl said to me "Aunt Joan people don't know I live in a home do they?"

I've always liked children so I used to do voluntary work, helping at this home in my spare time, evenings and weekends.

One Saturday the staff were asked out to an evening meal and the Matron asked me if I thought I could cope with looking after them. Old big head said "Oh yes" and I've never worked so hard in my life. They were delightful children, not all from broken homes, some because their mother was in hospital, some because they were waiting for a bigger house, because they lived with their grandparents, and it was overcrowded.

Well old big head got to work. If you have never bathed 24 children, all on your own, put them to bed, kissed them, tucked them up with lots of cuddles, heard their prayers, you've never lived. One bathroom, two baths, a little warm water in each, you can't have a lot of water each time because it would take too long to drain away. A child in each bath, two being dried, two naked ready to get in a bath, two half undressed and children on the stairs waiting their turn all in different states of undress.

You always get a couple of boisterous ones that would kick their knickers about shouting "Knickers, knickers" or saying something

rude. I had to nip that in the bud before it got out of hand, before it started. Oh yes! That was an evening to remember.

I was Auntie to two children, Sonia T and Micky P. They had the same mother but different fathers and it was found that there were several more children in other homes all different surnames. Sonia was about nine and a little devil, only because she knew she had a mother and felt rejected. No one would take her out, she was so naughty and for quite a while the staff would not let me take her out. I took her brother Micky, and he was good, home to tea. After a while I was allowed to take Sonia home after I'd pushed it, and she wasn't as bad as I expected. Mind you she climbed on the top of the railings in the Causeway so she was higher than my head nothing to hold on to.

That was when Cooper's yard was a river, deep and flowing. Then it was Handscomes and the river flowed under the road, until it was all changed and is now a sales yard. I did think I would have to jump in the river after her if she fell in. What a relief when she climbed down. Then she did climb peoples' steps, ring doorbells or knock the knockers and look in peoples' windows, but it was all high spirits.

As my nieces and nephews were at times little horrors, I was quite up to coping with that kind of thing, not quite as hair raising perhaps. When I got back the staff were looking out for me and said "How did you get on?" and I think they were disappointed when I said "Alright". The Matron had me in her room and asked me how I really got on and how she really had behaved and said they would understand if I did not wish to take her out again. I said my nieces and nephews were no angels, she was no problem. She came to my house many times with Micky. The worse thing she did was to keep going into the bathroom and come out smelling of talc powder and scent and emptied all the tins and bottles. I took Billy home one day with the other two. I don't know how he did it, or when, but he unscrewed every screw in the place, door handles came apart, a drawer fell apart and as you know if a doorknob falls off sometimes you have the knob in your hand but the other half of the door handle knob and shaft falls the other side, you cannot open the door. So there I was with knob in hand, stuck in the bathroom. I had quite a job getting out of the bathroom window then of course we had to

find screws to fit. All the children needed was love. Sonia always sat on my lap, wouldn't let anyone else. The children didn't have numbers for their clothes. No-one was a number. The rows of hangers had a ball or a bat or a car or a cat, so everything they had was marked, even the little ones knew if their clothes' hanger had a dog or a train, all their clothes were marked like that, a dog or a train.

One of the staff was quite a bossy boots, staid and sharp talking, you know "Come on" "stop talking" but she was well liked as she made sure the children were alright. One child, a girl of 9-10, had had several lumps taken off her head which made her a little bald in places. This woman would take a lot of time combing and setting her hair with ribbons so the bald patches wouldn't be seen.

Sonia was given a torch for a Christmas present, but it had to be taken away because at night she would run between the beds flashing it on and off which frightened the children.

Christmas time, the Matron would have the children in her room one at a time, to shout up the chimney what they would like Father Christmas to bring them. One of the staff would be behind the big sofa, with torch, pen and pencil, writing down what they would like, within reason. Then they had a little idea what to get them.

There was little Sarah and Derek. He was a lovely little boy but he would never ever be more than four years old, then he showed his Down's syndrome or as it was called then, Mongolism. His sister was the same, she was seven. They were such lovely children, always putting their arms round you, wanting to cuddle. One poor child came from a broken home, was adopted, then that marriage broke up and there was a divorce. So she had that tragedy to go through again. I know for several nights the Matron sat with her all night while she cried herself to sleep.

A new child, a boy, came and for a few days he would not do as he was told, then they found he was deaf, things got a lot easier after that. I worked with a young girl who had been in a home because her mother died. Then her father married again and she went back

home. She said she got on well with her stepmother but it took her a while to settle down, as she missed the other children and the hustle and bustle of a large family. There was always someone to play with.

I often wonder what happened to Sonia and Micky and all the other children. I would like to think that Sonia is happy and married with children of her own.

The Haroldene Home was closed down and children fostered to families. That could have been a mistake, they were used to each other and would have to get used to other people's ways. Often the teenagers who had left the home, went back for a weekend as it was their home. They all needed much more than a roof over their heads, three meals a day and a bed.

They are all grown up now. They may forget me but I'll never forget them.

*Joan Emerson*

### **Yesterday's House**

They've gone, slipped away, the house is empty It looks surprised, taken aback that they went and left it behind.

It was a happy house, with first the babies, children, teenagers, all at different years.

Laughter from the garden, squeals of fun a few tears, a tree house, dogs, barbecues, people coming and going, relations and friends, parties.

Sitting in the garden in the afternoon people talking, drinking, eating, then the chill of the evening air.

The house welcomes them all into its warm embrace, always pleased to see them, always pleased to receive them, always warm at Christmas with the tree up to the roof, every year a different colourful arrangement, presents beneath its laden branches, the fun of opening presents, so beautifully wrapped that one didn't want to tear the paper. A restful house.

The feeling of goodwill, affection, generosity, the house gave what it knew the owners wanted.

It new all, it listened, it gave to them what they gave in their turn. It watched them go, taken aback, but it also knew that it was time for them to move onto pastures new, and new adventures.

Knowing all this the house gave some of itself to take with them.

A house must have had happiness and love to make it a happy place.

God bless your new house.

## DAISY

There is my Daisy  
My black and white cat  
Sitting looking up at me  
Wanting my lap  
Wanting my lap  
To feel nice and warm  
To feel wanted and loved  
Who could do her harm  
So now she is seated  
Purring her song  
How long will she stay there  
I hope not too long  
There's dusting to do  
Dinner to get  
But she is so comfortable  
So she won't go just yet

*J. Emerson 2006*

## GOODBYE

Daisy, Daisy, why did you have to leave  
Daisy, Daisy, you've left me here to grieve  
Your day is done I'm left behind  
The house is empty now, I find  
You were ill, I had no choice  
But how I miss your so loud voice  
Will I be missed when I have to go  
Like you Daisy, I'll never know.

*J. Emerson June 2006.*

### **SPECIAL FRIENDS**

I'm having tea  
With Ted and Joan  
And Brian and Lucy  
We won't dine alone  
There will be Win  
There may be more  
There's always a welcome  
At Ted and Joan's door  
There will be lovely scones  
Cheesy or sweet  
And homemade cake  
We're in for a treat  
Yes! I'm having tea  
Being picked up by car  
With Special Friends  
Give them the Gold Star

*J. Emerson 2006*

### **Oh! Dear**

I've got out my tool kit  
My reading lamps gone wrong  
I'm looking for the screwdriver  
I hope it won't take long  
I've taken out the light bulb  
Have the wires come apart?  
The lamp is on its side now  
I'm really making a start  
I must get the leads right  
Or I'll blow a fuse  
And the bits and pieces  
I can't afford to lose  
Oh! I really do hope  
I can get it right  
Because I really do need  
To read my book tonight

*J. Emerson 2006*

### **CONNIE'S NERO**

You were my companion  
You were always there  
We lived together  
Your life we did share  
Now the place seems so empty  
No welcoming friend  
It's so heart breaking  
When a line has to end  
I do think with much joy  
All the things that we did  
You needing my attention  
Like one great big kid  
You sitting on my knee  
Or with me, in bed  
So many memories  
There's only one thing to be said  
My Special Companion  
We enjoyed many days  
I'll always remember  
Your sweet, gentle ways

*J. Emerson 2006*

### **BIRCHANGER WOODS**

If you go down to the woods today  
You'll get such a big surprise  
Instead of all those lovely trees  
You'll never believe your eyes  
There's rows and rows of houses  
Small gardens, not a tree  
Where is all the honeysuckle  
And bluebells that used to be  
Where are all the wood anemones  
Tall trees that stretched to the sky  
How sad it is, that it's all gone  
Sadly I hurry by.



*J. Emerson 2004*



## **TOUGH**

I didn't have any breakfast  
I didn't get my cup of tea  
I didn't have dinner either  
What will become of me  
I do know I ordered something  
Which sounded very nice  
They even came to fetch my dishes  
Not once, but twice  
I know I'm down for an operation  
I'm waiting here all forlorn  
I hope they're not late, I'm all in a state  
My hankie in shreds now is torn  
I keep looking to see if they're coming  
I sit here already to run  
My knees they are knocking, my courage is dropping  
All I want is to get the thing done

*J. Emerson Sunday June 2004*

## **What! Me.**

Now I'm laying in my bed  
With questions running in my head  
I wonder what to-days about  
Will I grizzle, cry or shout.  
Will they poke, pull or prod  
Will they think "what a poor old sod"  
The old girls past her sell by date  
But we'll patch her up, heaven can wait  
Let her have a few years longer  
We're sure tomorrow she'll be much stronger  
Get up old girl, make a cup of tea  
Then you'll feel better, you wait and see  
Ah! Me.

**Oh! The courage of some people**

They will get up and try  
Some will look up and try hard to smile  
When wanting to cry.  
The wonderful courage of some people  
When pain really gets a hold  
They try so hard to get on  
Put on a face so bold.  
I salute their courage  
I lift my hat really high  
For without that courage within them  
They would never get by

For Rose, at Harlow Hospital 2004 who never grumbled,  
complained, just tried harder.

*J Emerson*

**HOSPITAL TRANSPORT**

What is it with the Hospital car service?  
What have I done to them?  
That they never want to pick me up  
In their Hospital car again  
What is wrong with the Hospital car service  
I sit here, waiting and waiting  
Two hours gone and I still sit here  
Wondering, it's so aggravating  
Will they come to pick me up???  
My appointment is at ten  
It's gone eleven, I still sit here  
Have they forgotten me again?

*J. Emerson 2003*

### GET OUT THE BOAT

Its pouring with rain, will it never stop  
I didn't ask for a deluge, only a drop  
Just a little rain to help my spring greens  
To water my flowers and the runner beans  
It's rushing down the road, swirling round the bend  
Where's it all coming from, won't it ever end  
It's coming down faster and harder again  
There must be other people who could do with this rain



It stops not for funerals, weddings or play  
By the look of the clouds, it's another wet day  
Oh Well! Get out the wellies, it's no good to moan  
Rush down to the shops and hurry back home  
It'll do no good to keep complaining  
If it's going to rain, it'll keep on raining.

*J. Emerson 2002*

### The fields in and around Hatfield Forest



Oh to have seen such a wonderful sight  
Fields full of buttercups golden and bright  
They were in their thousands, the grass could not compete  
A carpet of gold, untouched by man's feet  
It seemed that they stretched, mile after mile  
Making me pause, to look for a while  
I would have liked to stay much longer to stare  
There was so much beauty, I looked everywhere  
I couldn't believe it, so much gold covered the ground  
You had to see it, to believe all around  
To see so many buttercups, a delight to the eye  
A day to remember, I'm glad I came by  
When winter comes and days are so grey  
I shall then remember that beautiful day

*Joan Emerson May 2009*

### **NOT A PATIENT PATIENT**

Coughs and sneezes spread diseases  
As I know full well  
Blinding headaches, tonsils roaring  
Oh! I feel like hell  
Where's the aspirin, where's the whisky  
Oh! No! don't sneeze, it's pain  
The top of my head flies into the sky  
Will I ever see it again  
Feeling rough and feeling awful  
Oh please do something for me  
Hit me hard on the top of my head  
Put me out of my misery  
Coughing, sneezing lots of wheezing  
I'll try a cup of tea  
Sip it gratefully, hot and soothing  
I'm beginning to feel like me

*J. Emerson 24 January 2000*

### **DAISY'S "THANK YOU" TO THE LADY YET**

I did try to push a car  
I couldn't push it very far  
Oh! It was a revelation  
A very clever operation  
That sorted out my hip and jaw  
Now I am as good as I was before  
Please dear lady, take a bow  
You only have to see me now  
I love my missus, and she loves me too  
Thank you, Daisy

*J. Emerson August 2000*

## TO TIPTREE AND MALDEN CLUBS FIRST OUTING 1998

Didn't we have a lovely day  
The day we went to Tiptree  
All our people were merry and bright  
The sun shone down, our world was alright  
When we went to Tiptree  
Rows and rows of jams on the shelves  
We all went along, helping ourselves  
What a lovely way, to spend part of the day  
When we went to Tiptree  
Back we went and got on the coach  
For then we were going to Malden  
But one of us had to sit on the floor  
And all she looked at was the lavatory door  
When we were going to Malden  
Some decided to look round the town  
Some went to the park, where a restaurant  
was found  
The flowers were beautiful, they had to be seen  
The grass and the trees such a wonderful green  
The tide was in, boats and ships glided past  
Barges with brown sails and a very tall mast  
It was all so peaceful, warm and serene  
When we went to Malden



*J. Emerson 1998*

## Contentment

What do you want, out of this life?  
I want contentment, there's enough of this strife  
I want contentment, and at the end of the day  
To be at peace with myself, to be able to say  
To family and friends, "Oh to see you is good"  
Everyone behaving just as they should  
Everyone showing care, and not neglect  
To the young, and the old let's give them respect  
It's so much nicer, when there is no stress  
It won't always be easy, I must confess  
When we are irritable and things won't go right  
That's when we are tested, and try as we might  
It's hard to be nice, so just keep quiet for a while  
Someone's sure to pass by, and give us a smile  
To be content at the end of the day  
Yes, that is what I want



*J. Emerson 1997*

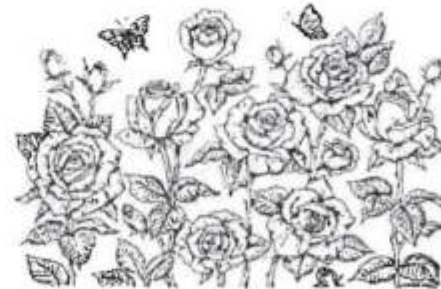
### **Eighty Plus**

When you are eighty you still want to run  
You feel you're sixteen, and want lots of fun  
You go to a dance and the music gets fast  
Halfway through you get dizzy and then at last  
You think to yourself, they are younger than me  
I used to be like that, why didn't I see that I'm getting  
Older, but I can still have a dance  
I'll do the slow foxtrot and take a chance  
That I will get round the room, once, twice or more  
My partner is smiling as we move round the floor  
Just because I am eighty, I don't have to sit  
I can do lots of things, I try to keep fit  
I can go out with my friends, or get my pension  
So many things to do, too many to mention  
My grandchildren are lively they keep me on my toes  
What goes on in their heads, nobody knows  
I may be eighty, but one thing is certain  
It'll be a long time before you see my final curtain  
So much to do, so much to see  
I'm going to enjoy all the years left to me.

*J. Emerson 1997*

### **Twilight**

We do not hear much about dusk these days  
The young ones think it's an old fashioned phrase  
But sitting outside on a warm Summer's night,  
Just sitting still, in the dusk of twilight  
Watching the golden glow of the sun giving way  
To the soft darkness of night, which will stay  
For a few hours before moving on.  
To give us again the warmth of the sun.  
But the twilight hours give us the time  
To rest from our labours, to rest our minds.  
To sit and breathe the fragrance of flowers  
Roses, night scented stock, refreshed by rain showers  
Just sitting and thinking of what the day meant  
In the soft twilight, a God given event  
Slowly the sunset and twilight are gone  
And rested, content, we can now carry on.



*J. Emerson 1989*

### **Springtime**

Spring is here, Oh! Spring at last  
Here I am, in bed, early morning  
Spring is here and I'm still in bed  
With my mouth wide open, yawning  
Spring is here, but it's cold outside  
It's cold and dark with rain  
My bed is warm I snuggle down  
Pulling the bedclothes round me again  
Once again I put my feet to the floor  
Shivering from my knees to my head  
So the only Spring that I'm thinking about  
Is the Spring when I spring back to bed

*J. Emerson 1989*

### **THE CLOCK, WHICH IS NEW IN THE SCOUT HUT WITH A WIRE GUARD OVER IT**

I wish I had a canary  
So I could put it in the cage  
The one that's in the Scout hut  
The old clock had been there an age  
It would look at all the people  
Look down on all they do  
I wonder what it would think of us  
If it would think we were a motley crew  
I wish I had a little bird  
The Scouts would be surprised  
When they looked up to see the time  
It would look down into their eyes

*J. Emerson 1988*

### **THE COUNTRYSIDE**

The countryside so near my home  
Over your fields I love to roam  
In the Spring to see the grass so green  
The trees in bud, where bare they'd been  
Hold up their branches to the sun  
Spring gives hope to everyone.  
The young lambs with their mother's bleat  
And to see fields golden with waving wheat  
Blackbirds nest, Thrush too are singing  
Across the meadows Church bells are ringing  
Cows and horses browse in buttercup fields  
Fragrant May blossom soon to red berries yield  
When early morning mist must give way  
To the warm sun, we smell new mown hay  
To sit by a stream and ponder and stare  
At the Countryside and all the beauty there  
Oh! How over your fields I love to roam  
The countryside, so near my home

*J. Emerson 1987*

### **FROM MY HEART**

When I get up to say my piece  
At this Club, that means so much to me  
And I look at all your smiling faces  
A warm warm feeling comes over me  
This is my Club, you are my friends  
And I am blessed far beyond my worth  
With such friends, who needs heaven  
When I have happiness right here on earth  
I can't get up and say I love you all  
It would embarrass you and I'd feel a fool  
Such a lot is meant by these few words  
So I'll just say Thank You Thank You All

*J. Emerson 1987*



### **Where is that nurse?**

No one seems to stand still long enough  
So my ear can hear what is said  
But when you are deaf and elderly  
Lying in your hospital bed  
And people just keep flying by  
Is it you or them that's crazy?  
The poor old brain gets addled fast  
Or is it mine that's lazy?  
Just have a little patience please  
You may be as I am, one day  
We too have lived and loved, like you  
And still have a few things to say

*Joan Emerson 2007*

### **Evening rest**

Goodbye Mr Sun  
Hello Mr Moon  
It's been a hot day  
You've not come too soon  
It's good to sit out  
And let your mind free  
Of day's worries and toil  
And then you will see  
Just sitting outside  
In the quiet summer evening  
In the garden so cool  
And the sun is just leaving  
The sunset was brilliant  
Now this day is done  
Hello Mr Moon  
Goodbye Mr Sun

*Joan Emerson 2006*

### **How to have a bath with a bandaged leg**

*for "the other Joan"*

Oh my gawd, what am I doing  
Lying here, my back a ruin  
Trying to lie still in deep hot water  
Leg in the air, I didn't oughter  
I really did feel I'd like a bath  
So, with the help of my other half  
I'm doing all I can to keep my leg dry  
What do I look like, I could really cry  
How to get out, not getting my leg wet  
That is a problem I've not thought about yet  
What do I do with leg still in the air  
I give it a look, a right nasty stare  
Now for the struggle, arms waving and heave  
Splashing and turning, the bath I do leave  
I am exhausted, but feel now I could laugh  
When I think of my leg sticking up out of the bath.

J. Emerson

### **Joan's memories**

I sit here  
I am alone  
It is so quiet  
They've all gone home  
It is so strange  
I miss them all  
I still expect  
To hear them call  
I still expect  
To hear the door  
And footsteps shuffling  
On the floor  
And feet stamping  
Up the stair  
I look around  
They are not there  
I sit here  
Ears atune  
Wondering if  
They'll be here soon  
They have gone  
Away by plane  
but they'll soon  
be here again  
At the table  
I sit alone  
Because my family  
Have all gone home.

## Memories

I went to Fawbert and Barnard School  
And what do I see  
So many happy little faces  
Looking up at me  
So many happy children  
I could see they had love and care  
There they were, looking up at me  
Wondering why I was there  
I too had sat in that classroom  
About 90 years, or so  
I remember sitting at a desk  
Many years ago.

*Joan D. Emerson*  
*Now 102 years*  
*1918-2020*

## Horning 1972

Just a little way from Horning  
Cast off the boat and without warning  
Joan did the splits, then fell into the water  
And that's a thing you never oughter  
Swam to the boat, to clamber inside  
The boat turned away, to her surprise  
She swam to the bank, and soon clambered out  
Bill turned the boat round and he came about  
Pat in the cabin, having a fit  
Saying "She would, just like her, the great silly nit"  
Got into dry clothes, then burst into laughter  
The clothes were still wet, even the day after  
The laughter went on, Joan, Pat and Bill  
Each time it's thought of, they laugh at it still  
They'll never forget that night on the Broads  
The performance would rate an Academy award

## Lilies

I've got lilies in my garden  
Snow white, tall and proud  
I've got tiger lilies in my garden  
Their petals an orange cloud  
I've got day lilies in my garden  
Their flowers last but a day



But my nicest Lily is not in my garden  
She lives a few miles away  
My Lily is my dearest friend  
At Muswell Hill she lives  
The wit and humour that she shares  
She has so much to give  
So to my Lily at 91  
I wish you a happy Birthday  
A happy year to follow on  
With flowers and love all the way

*With love from Joan, 2003*

## It's all go

Please get into the wheelchair, dear  
We are going for an Xray  
Now get onto the table, dear  
Please turn round this, now that way  
Hold your breath, now let it out  
Another one I'll take, dear  
One minute while I take a look  
To see if it is clear, dear  
Now please get into the wheelchair,  
We go by the lift once more  
Here we are by your ward, dear  
I'll leave you right by the door

## What, me?

Now I'm laying in my bed  
With questions running in my head  
I wonder what today's about  
Shall I grizzle, shall I shout  
Will they poke, pull or prod  
Will they think, "What a poor old sod"?  
The old girl's past her sell by date  
But we'll patch her up, Heaven can wait  
Let her have a few years longer  
We're sure tomorrow she'll be much stronger  
Get up old girl, make a cup of tea  
Then you'll feel better .. ah me! Ah me!

*June 2004*

### **Blackbird**

Oh! blackbird, you sing your sweet song  
From hedge to tree as you travel along  
To folks like me you give so much pleasure  
With your sweet song, which I'll always treasure



When winds blow cold and winter chill  
I still hear that melodious trill  
And wait for Spring to hear again  
The blackbird's song and sweet refrain

*May 2000*

### **Ode to the Numb Bums**

Numb Bums, Numb Bums  
See them all sit there  
Numb Bums, Numb Bums  
They never leave their chair  
Numb Bums, Numb Bums  
I think they've taken root  
They never seem to want to move  
I know I seem a brute  
Because I would like to get a cracker  
The loudest one I can  
And put it underneath their chair  
And make it go off Bang!!  
Oh I wonder what the Numb Bums would do  
How quickly would they rise  
And to be there when they do  
Oh! won't they be surprised?



For all the folk who sit, never move, because they are old, have  
screwomatics, dizzy turns or just plain lazy.

*J. Emerson 1998*

### What a to do

I wish I could say "I'm here for the beer"  
But I'm lying in bed with pains so severe  
Sister Brenda is saying "Be still and be quiet"  
As though I'm thinking of starting a riot  
I'm trying to get up to go to the loo  
And my body is saying it doesn't want to go



Have you ever laid in bed, mealtray on your chest  
Hoping to find the right hole and not drop on your vest  
And when you have had as much as you can eat  
Along come the pills to put you to sleep  
All I want to do is say loud and clear  
With a glass in my hand "I'm only here for the beer."

*J. Emerson July 2004*

### Friendship

It's a wonderful thing, to have a friend  
One who will stay true, right to the end  
But if we want friendship, we must do our share  
By showing our friends that we also do care.  
Friendship is knowing the time to be still  
And listen with patience to those who are ill  
Or if they have a worry, offer a shoulder  
We all have our fears as we get older.  
Don't put friends down, smile, hold out your hand  
Encourage and comfort, let them know where you stand  
So let's show our love for the short time we're here  
But one thing's for certain, you must be sincere.

*J. Emerson 1987*

**Daybreak**

I'm looking out of my window early morning  
To see the day was slowly dawning  
I wondered what the day would bring  
Sunshine rain, but not a thing  
Could be seen, dawn not yet breaking  
A breathless silence of a world just waking  
Standing there I could not tell  
But hoped my day would turn out well  
Then knowing it was too cold to stay  
So into bed to sleep till day.

*J. Emerson 2014*

**The other Joan**

We have shared many happy days  
We understood each other's ways  
She called herself the other Joan  
Being friends together, we were never alone  
You were there for me, and I for you  
our friendship was strong and really true  
Tears are falling now you have flown  
I'll never forget my dear friend  
The other Joan

*J. Emerson 2015*

**Just a thought**

What is death? We'll never know  
We all have a time to go  
What is death? Is it never waking?  
Leaving the world, and forsaking  
All the things we used to do  
Will we experience something new?  
More likely we will be no more  
Just a memory, no encore

*J. Emerson (Age 96 years) November 2014*

**The year of the rain**

If you want to paddle  
Then go to my front gate  
Instead of being a nice clear road  
It looks just like a lake.

The rain, it keeps on falling  
Running so fast down the slope  
If it rains much longer, then  
I'll have to hire a boat.



*J. Emerson February 2014*



### **Hatfield Forest**

Let me go to my beautiful forest  
And there let me dream  
My beautiful beautiful forest  
With all its shades of green  
Let me sit by the lake in its quietness  
Watching the wildlife go by  
There is so much to see in my forest  
From the green green grass to the sky  
There is peace and goodwill in my forest  
And I am free of care  
I have peace and contentment in my forest  
Just by being there



*J. Emerson January 2011*

### **Sticks and stones can break our bones**

But calling you names cannot hurt you  
That's what my mother said to me  
But sadly today that seems not true  
There are some words we cannot say  
Certain gestures we must not make  
It's something to do with racial tension  
And those rules we must not break  
Now some people want compensation  
For words spoken in temper or strife  
So are we losing our freedom of speech?  
What more can they take out of our life?  
Are we forgetting the fun that we had?  
We teased and called each other silly names  
We let off steam by shouting at the ref  
It was all in the spirit of the games

*J. Emerson June 2013*

**Who am I?**

Anger, why this anger?  
Why? What is it all about?  
All this turmoil, taunt inside  
That cannot be let out

Is it because you think that you  
Are being unfairly used?  
That you didn't think quick enough  
And are feeling very bruised

Why didn't you say "No" right out loud?  
Where did your courage fail?  
Why don't you stick up for yourself?  
Not bang your head against the wall

Stiffen up your backbone  
Say what you really mean  
Let them know just who you are  
Show them your self-esteem

*July 2013*

**Oh snow, when will you go?**

You stop everything from moving  
Falling softly down, so we can't get to town  
Yet inside watching is soothing  
Oh snow, the clouds are so low  
I know there is much more to fall  
Everything white, a beautiful sight  
For a while giving peace to us all

Oh snow, for goodness' sake go  
We've had enough for this year  
When I see the paths clear, no snow to be seen  
That's enough to make anyone cheer

Oh snow, where did you go?  
We can now get out once again  
The blizzards are gone, but is won't be long  
Before it is starting to rain



*January 2013*

### The outpatient

I'm sitting here wondering when  
I shall see outside again  
Nurses coming, people going  
All in motion, to-ing and fro- ing  
Won't they soon call my name?  
Now here comes that nurse  
again



Oh no! It's not for me  
How much longer will it be?  
Now I'm getting quite excited  
Oh no! Once again my hopes are blighted  
Time and again there are new faces  
Then more people fill their places  
Staff and nurses move around  
There are patients to be found  
The doctors are busy and running late  
We shouldn't grumble about the long wait  
Everything's done to make things easy for us  
So let's sit and relax, and make no more fuss

*J. Emerson July 2013*

### Dorothy Thomas Club Catering

Dorothy T, can we have a club dinner?  
I know fish and chips will be a sure winner  
What about a ploughman's with pickles and cheese  
With ice cream and fruit, that also will please  
Crisps on the table, a nice glass of wine  
Crusty rolls and butter will do us just fine  
Hard work for you, Dorothy, but we do appreciate  
It's all so mouthwatering, I feel I can't wait.



*J. Emerson 2000*

### **Snow scene**

I'm glad-I'm- indoors, looking out  
Now that all the snow's about  
Watching the busy, foraging birds  
The scene, too beautiful for words  
Trees clothed in white, not often seen  
Peace and quiet, a magical scene  
Sky full of snow, nearly touching the ground  
Such dazzling whiteness, untouched all around  
So I sit by my fire, warmed by its glow  
I see only the beauty, not the coldness of snow  
But later on, when comes the thaw  
I don't remember the cold snow anymore

*J. Emerson February 2012*

### **Birthdays**

In a few days' time, I'll be 98  
And I'm not ready for the Golden Gate  
I'm not thinking of going below  
Because that's the place I don't want to go  
So much to do, many places to run  
I want to stay and join in the fun  
To join in the fun would really please me  
There's still much to do, so much to see  
Those few days have passed - I'm now 98  
Let me get on with life  
I really can't wait

*Joan Emerson October 2016*

### Window watching

I see many shapes go by  
I think it's raining  
I do not have to wonder why  
I know it's raining  
Umbrellas up, heads well down  
But I'm not complaining  
From my window watching folk go by  
I find it entertaining

*Joan Emerson October 2016*

### The flower lady

Here I sit for hours and hours  
Hoping someone will buy my flowers  
I sit here and watch the world go by  
Young and old, and wonder why

They all seem to be in a panic state  
No one seems to have time to wait  
And look around and see me here  
To smile and give me a word of cheer

I sit here and watch them go  
Faces set, so full of woe  
Would their faces crumble and fall



If they smiled at me at all?  
Is their life all weary and sad?  
Is there nothing to make them glad?

I sit here at peace with my day  
My flowers in a bucket, and in a way  
I'm glad I'm sitting on the steps in the sun  
And not with the folks all on the run

Oh! here comes a gentleman with cash in hand  
Wanting to buy flowers from my flower stand  
Are they for his mother, or for his wife?  
Or for his girlfriend, the love of his life?  
Whoever they're for, it's alright by me  
A few more to sell, then home for my tea

*J. Emerson May 2012*

Thinking of Mary, who used to dress up as a flower lady with Dorothy, at our Wednesday over 60s Club fancy dress competition.

Oh! what a heavy heart we sometimes have to deal with. It's no good whining, moaning, wishing, or "if only." All the sighing and tears won't make it any different.



Sometimes it takes time to settle the feeling in your heart or head. The empty space, the missing person. Time that hangs on, where once it raced ahead. Some get peace in their church, others in family or friends, or work, or gardening, or just wish to be alone. We all have different ways to think of loved ones, to come to terms with losing them. That's when it's good to have memories, so that in time we can recall them, enjoy once again all the good times, and remember again with deep feelings, the love we have had. That's when we start to heal.

*J. Emerson 2007*

**Being blind is no fun**

I cannot even try to run  
I'll have to try to walk with care  
There could be something that shouldn't be there  
On the floor I won't want to fall  
Or bang myself upon the wall  
I'll listen with care when I hear a voice  
Because I have no other choice

I will not even see them smile  
I suppose I'll get used to it, in a while  
Being blind, will I cope?  
Sorry, but there is no hope

Having someone to keep me clean  
And eating food I have not seen  
If I couldn't see to write or read  
And rely on people for my every need

How far would my dignity fall?  
Oh no! I couldn't cope with that at all

*J. Emerson September 2012*

### Sisters

There they go, on their way  
Are they going to Margate today?  
Are they shopping for sticks of rock?  
They'll look in the window of every shop  
Now a cup of tea and a cream cake  
How much more walking can their feet take?

Again refreshed, now to look at the sea  
Go Auntie Daisy and Nanna Bea  
Will they paddle and make a splash  
Oh! Look at the time, they'd better dash  
To get to the bus, they know it won't wait  
They have to get home, they don't want to be late  
Oh! they have had a great day by the sea  
Auntie Daisy and Nanna Bea

*J. Emerson 2012*



### Squirrels

I'm looking out of my window  
It's a rainy sort of day.  
It has just gone nine o'clock  
The sky is dark and grey.  
I've been watching my little squirrel  
I've made him run around  
Altho' it's raining steadily  
The monkey nuts he's found.  
He keeps climbing the bird table  
Taking one nut at a time  
Then running fast, across the grass  
Another hiding place he'll find.  
He runs around the garden  
To find another spot.  
He then digs another hole.  
He means to have the lot.  
It's so much fun to watch him  
Running here and there  
So many nuts, so many places  
But will he remember where?

*J. Emerson*

### **The Jumble Sale**

Oh! Why don't they open the door?  
I've stood here twenty minutes or more  
People keep pushing and shoving in front  
A child's dropped his money, we all have to hunt.  
Now it's been found, we again form a queue.  
Someone's banging the door, "Let us in, do."  
The wind has got up, the sky looks like rain.  
Someone's opened the door then shut it again.  
I look to the back, there's such a crowd.  
I'm about in the middle, the talking seems loud,  
With shuffling and dragging of many feet.  
There's Mums and Grans and families complete.  
All carrying baskets or bags over their arm.  
Some looking impatient, some seem so calm.  
Mothers shout at their children as they play about.  
Some raise their hand as if to give them a clout.  
Now the doors open. Oh! What a rush.  
People at the back push, we get caught in the crush.  
Shuffling forward, ten pence is the fee.  
All the small children, they get in free.  
Mums with their offspring, push to the fore.  
So many of us, will we get through the door?  
Rush to the stalls, crowded with clothes,  
Turn them all over who will want those.  
Someone is treading all over my feet

Digging in with elbows and baskets complete.  
Other side of the table, the helpers are smiling  
The pennies in the tin are steadily piling.  
Some of the men will put on a hat,  
Drawing a laugh and a lot of backchat.  
The other side of the hall I spy a book.  
I struggle to get there to take a look.  
Someone is punching, stuffing things in their bag.  
I expect that bargain is the cheapest they've had.  
Tho' it's for charity it's sad what folks do.  
But most people are big hearted and willingly give too.  
Turning things over, laughing and pushing.  
Bags are bulging, some people just looking.  
A crowd round the bric a brac stall.  
That's very popular, something for all  
Men's trousers for the garden or a work jacket,  
A ball for the children or an old tennis racket.  
Now there's a shout, "Tea being served."  
After all that crush, it is well deserved.  
You sit on a chair and gratefully sip tea.

*J. Emerson 1988*



### **Daybreak**

I'm looking out of my window early morning  
To see the day was slowly dawning  
I wondered what the day would bring  
Sunshine rain, but not a thing  
Could be seen, dawn not yet breaking  
A breathless silence of a world just waking  
Standing there I could not tell  
But hoped my day would turn out well  
Then knowing it was too cold to stay  
So into bed to sleep till day.

*J. Emerson 2014*

### **The whispering breeze**

As I walk through the meadow  
The grass it was so green  
I heard the wind a whispering  
Of all that it had seen  
It whispered to the willow trees  
Of all who had sat there  
The young lads and lasses  
And their secrets it did share  
It listened to the young love  
As they murmured soft and low  
Then it whispered to the rushes  
That by the river grow  
The wind whispered to the rushes  
The softly on them blew  
Which made them wave and dance about  
While whispering what he knew  
It whispered to the old folk  
As they wandered by the river  
It made them think of their young days  
And the kisses he did give her  
The wind whispers to the green fields  
And whispers through the trees  
It whispers of bright sunny days  
Cooled by the whispering breeze.

*October 1989*

**Oh gawd!**

I wish this pain would go away  
But I think it's here to stay  
I sit me up I lay me down  
But it's still there, I loudly groan  
Get me a doctor! Get somebody please  
Give me something this pain to ease  
be it morphine, aspirin or hammer  
Do something quick, don't stand there and stammer  
Oh! Now the needle's in my arm  
Pain going away, everything's so calm  
Thank you doctor, I'm doing fine  
Now you've done away with that pain of mine

**Tough**

I didn't have any breakfast  
I didn't get my cup of tea  
I didn't have any dinner either  
What will become of me?  
I do know I ordered something  
Which sounded very nice  
They even came to fetch my dishes  
Not once, but twice  
I know I'm down for an operation  
I'm waiting here all forlorn  
I hope they're not late, I'm all in a state  
My hankie in shreds now is tom  
I keep looking to see if they're coming  
I sit here already to run  
My knees are knocking, my courage is dropping  
All I want is to get the thing done

*Saturday night/Sunday morning*

*June 5th 2004*

**Down a lane with Mary**

Trees overhead, a winding lane  
Earth that's refreshed by falling rain  
Shafts of sunlight through the trees  
Making patterns by the moving leaves  
Banks so thick with wild vegetation  
Nettles, cow parsley, food for meditation  
Red poppies, further than the eye can see  
In the cornfield, dance joyfully red poppies in the grass so green  
In my mind's eye will always be seen  
They'll always be seen, when summer's gone  
Growing among the golden corn  
Red poppies, vetch, all down the bank  
Meadowsweet, red champions swell the rank  
Oh! to walk down a country lane  
To gaze and think and wonder again  
There seems no time to lift our eyes  
We walk blind then to our surprise  
We look around and all is there  
Green hedgerows, poppies, and we stare  
The beauty of it will remain  
In our hearts, walking down an English country lane.

**For my friends from the Enablement Team**

They come in the morning  
With happy smiling faces  
They get me out of bed  
And put me through my paces  
First into the shower  
In my birthday suit stand I  
It happens all so quickly  
No time to be shy  
Then in the afternoon  
they come again to me  
To see if I am coping  
And get me my tea  
What would I do without them  
I really could not tell  
They are such lovely people  
Helping me get well.

*J. Emerson 2014*

### **A wonderful day**

The sun's shining through my window  
What a glorious day  
Makes me want to get outside  
So now I'm on my way  
To potter in my garden  
And enjoy the warmth of the sun  
To talk to my friends over the hedge  
And feel love for everyone

What would I do without my garden  
And without the sun to give me pleasure  
These are the moments of my life  
That I will always treasure.

*J. Emerson June 2015*

### **My window**

My window is my friend  
Because it keeps me in touch  
With all that's going on outside



I'd miss it very much  
If I couldn't see the children  
On their way to school  
Some eagerly running by- looking very cool  
But some do not want to go  
Feet dragging all the way  
Parent trying to hurry them  
To get them to school that day

Then all the busy people  
Rushing to work or pleasure  
Umbrellas up, umbrellas down  
Depending on the weather  
All different ages of people  
Are passing by all day  
The young in eye-catching outfits  
It's great to see them that way





I had a little red bag  
I had it yesterday  
I wonder where I've put you  
I wish that I could say  
In you I put little gifts  
To give to friends I knew  
I wonder where I've put my bag  
I've searched the whole house through  
Little red bag, little red bag  
Several days have passed  
Let me find your hiding place  
So I can pick you up at last

*For the other Joan, 2010*

**Some pass by my window**

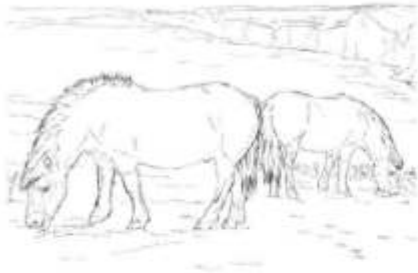
Faces blank and set  
Earplugs in, eyes not seeing  
How far do their minds get?  
They do not see the people  
Laughing as they pass by  
They do not hear the birds in song  
Or see the clouds in the sky  
What is it that they are hearing?  
Music? or a talk?  
Is it business they listen to  
As they walk



So much to see from my window  
Makes me feel I belong to their world  
A friendly wave, a welcome smile  
With pleasure my life is unfurled  
It's not good snivelling or crying  
We have to give of our best  
So try to keep happy and smiling  
And life will do all the rest

*J. Emerson 2012*

## Two ponies



Oh Jennifer, look over there  
Here come those two ponies you took into care  
They know you will give them a titbit or two  
So now they come running  
Because they trust you

*For Jennifer, my cousin, who lives in Ireland, in memory of happy days. Jennifer takes animals into care - horses, ponies, cats, dogs - gets them well and then rehomes them*

*J. Emerson 2012*