

Ingrid Parsley

She roams the path so she can find
The parsley that's been on her mind.
Parsley: a perfect backyard treat
Leafy, green, a hint of sweet.

A slinky caterpillar munches there
He acts as if he doesn't care.
She plucks him from his lofty perch
And happily calls off the search.

Rosemary, dill and basil grow
Daunted only by the snow.
But snow is far away today
While Ingrid Parsley comes to play.

Three year olds are never neat
So in the garden they should eat.
She munches herbs and then she spies
Tomatoes reaching for the skies.

It's like a salad in the yard
A berry or two, a bit of chard.
It's a snacking child's delight
With rows of goodies in her sight.

Ingrid Parsley makes a mess
Tomato seeds spill down her dress.
She grabs a shovel, starts to play
Planting seeds for another day.

Meghan Aagaard

To What, I Refer?

A soldier's beret,
a Christmas array?
Be it fruit not ripe
or spring - what a sight?
Is it preface to a place
- briar, field or ville?
I am rambling so –
I look not well,
But will you see
Just bring that tea.
Aha! I have it now,
It's well, you know
...it's like ...I mean
... it's **green**!!

Jerry Casciani

Hold on to your Green

This year the tall trees
Hold on to their green
Hold on to their green
With a tight fist
Like a child holding tight
To a lollypop stick
High winds knock down
Yellows, orange-reds and browns
But still they hold on
Hold on to their green
The summer lingers
Moss and grass still grow
Under patches of leaves
And the first wet snow
The deepening sun
Holds on to its gold
Holds on to its gold
Like a fire in the hearth
Burning low, burning low

Beneath the cold bark
The juices still flow
To help them hang on
The juices still flow
Till the very last one
Gives up and is gone
Gives up and is gone
While winter slips in
Where summer had been
Where summer had been

Winter buries her green
Underneath and below
In places unseen
She squirrels away green
Holding tight to her roots
She squirrels green away
Through the lightless days
And the seeping cold
She holds on to her green
Buried deep in the soil
She holds on to her green
Until green won't be held
And it springs from the ground
An explosion of green
Everywhere, all around
As the sunlight returns to
Pull green from the ground

So hold on to your green
Despite ice and snow
Hold it tight to your chest
Don't give up or let go
It may feel very small
But someday it will grow
Someday soon it will grow
And paint your world green
Like the tree buds in spring
You'll explode on the scene
And set the world aglow
So hold on to your green
Hold on to your green.

Nancy Dickerson

Green is...

Bring to me a place of growth and life.
Forget, I will, the look of haunted trees.

Sing to me a lime lullaby.
Hush my cold thoughts of white.

Touch my shoulder with your emerald hands.
Wind of blue won't burn my face.

Fill the air with rosemary, delight.
My nostrils awake, they no longer hibernate.

Read to me of moss that grows on trees.
Refrain from stories of bells and sleds.

Create a warm bath of seaweed, bright.
Melt the hard, unforgiving liquid.

Remind my taste buds of what fresh sugar snap peas are like;
put away canned and frozen.

Show me tilled valleys and lands.
Erase the endless dense void.

nourishing, living, soothing.

Whitney Hargett

GREEN IS

Green is a color, a shade, a hue;
Or a way of life one could assume--
not wanting nor wasting,
aware of the price
it cost to consume.

Green is a shade, from forest to blue;
or it denotes a point of view.
Resources are finite,
Earth is vulnerable.
Recycle, reuse.

How long can we take and take
and not pay the price--
arrogant excess,
environmental abuse.
while earth cries: 'Truce!'

Food and wealth were never intended
For just a few—yet that's what we do
and call it capitalism—a thing to adore---
which kills the connection of all living things,
while many go hungry
and others are 'winners' who hoard and store.

Green is the color of grass and trees
and food and flowers,
and things of beauty ever living,
where creatures thrive on land and sea--
Earth's rare distinction.

May 'green' be our call,
our clarion call, our duty indeed
which we should heed
to save our planet
from sure extinction.

Nancy Rehkugler

My Dad's Green Thumb

My dad's green thumb was a blessing indeed
As he used it successfully in tending the seed

A farmer, he was, for 53 years
Growing clover, alfalfa, and corn on the ears

His green thumb was masterful, plants growing so high
That hay bales were stacked nearly up to the sky

Corncribs were packed, and the silos were full
Gravity wagons were heaped up and difficult to pull

Dad's thumb had a talent, that's easy to say
But his greatest achievement was his gardening way

He found a real joy in making things grow
With plants he could nurture and seeds he could sew

With excitement each spring as the season came 'round
Dad planned with enthusiasm his hopes for the ground

He emptied the chicken coops, forking every last bit
To spread on his garden, enrichening it

Soil plowed under, smoothed over, and tamed
Rocks were picked off, and his rows were all laned

Bulbs, seeds, and seedlings were tucked into the earth
Expecting their output to be definitely worth

All the time and ambition that went into the task
Of creating a garden in which he could bask

Tomatoes, potatoes, squash, onions, and beans
Cucumbers, pumpkins, carrots, peas, and rich greens
Turnips, cabbages, radishes, gladiolas too
Are some of the produce which his green thumb grew

He always was giving his goodies away
To family and friends, whose green thumbs were grey

He always had more than was needed to eat
And sharing the excess was his favorite treat

As dad aged and had troubles and began to slow down
He still had the gumption to toil with the ground

Working with plants and playing in dirt
Gave him great satisfaction, and true sense of worth

Over time, and with maturity, I acquired the need
To garden myself, and work with the seed

Weeds, bugs, and critters are my nemesis, too
As they were my dad's, in the gardens he knew

With pride I grow veggies and flowers of my own
I was taught by a master of the gardening throne

Though my dad's now gone, and so is his farm
His green thumb lives on at the end of my arm.

Tom Steger

An Aversion to All Things Green

I remember
the first anxious day of school
pink cotton candy clouds drifting above in a cornflower blue sky
riding over rough roads in a cart pulled by Brutus
heading for the one-room schoolhouse up on “The Knoll”
my dear brother at the reins
we rounded a curve
a pitiful creature emerged from a nearby decrepit old house
disheveled and clad in a baggy, reptilian-colored dress
half-shout, half-wail sprung from her open mouth
scattering chickens in the dooryard
the reins flailed at Brutus
a lurch breaking into a gallop
the demented woman in hot pursuit
others emerged from the house and gave chase
reaching her, they took her firmly by the arm
and wordlessly led her back to the house.

I remember
this was nearly a daily ritual to and from school
we never knew her name
Because of her dress, she was simply Miss Lizzy Green --
the lizard of tales we boys told of narrow escapes from her clutches
we never knew the cause of her misery.
She was simply Miss Lizzy Green --
a real person assaulting the sensibilities of children daily
yet, not real – no real name, no birthday, no past, no future --
she simply “was”
and now just a green specter lodging in my memory....
I have often wondered whatever became of her
though no grownup in my world seemed to give her a passing thought
nor ever understood my deep aversion to all things green

Martin A. Sweeney

The Greenhouse

It's enough to make you "Green around the gills"
Kindergarteners penciling in bubbles on a sheet
Babies at tiny desks with folders propped up between them
"Why?" they ask. "You told us it was good to collaborate and solve problems together.
Now, it is 'cheating.' We're confused."
state assessments be damned school should be a place where it's OK
to explore
this is where you get to take chances to experiment
there are no right answers here this is a place of joy
where you get to laugh and run and play
to savor *Green Eggs and Ham* upon one's tongue and color outside the lines
to revel in realms of curiosities and manipulate gadgets
and discover who you are
and make sense of the big world
in which you have been planted
to be green like all the other tender shoots
not ripe but ripening fruit
carefully cultivated and nurtured by the teachers
It's ok to be green in this greenhouse.
Everyone understands except those in the statehouse.
"It isn't easy being green."
Just ask Kermit....when the test is over.

Martin A. Sweeney

Stupid Green

Okay, so one day I find that I have blood coming from the one place no guy ever wants to have blood come from. Not a little pink in the bowl; actually bleeding with the inherent searing pain. So I call the urologist and they need me in there right away because there is no scenario where blood coming from there warrants high-fives all around. They fast-track me for cytology, sonogram, CAT scan and all we find out is that I may be prone to kidney stones, which in this case is okay news considering what we were looking for.

The next step is for the doc to actually take a look. First he floods the area with what I believe to be a placebo anesthetic, judging by its effectiveness. Then he has to, um, insert this little fiber optic scope so he can see the condition of the affected area. There's an eyepiece on the other end of the scope. He's holding the scope to his eye with one hand and me with the other, manipulating this third-grade science project apparatus through a really sensitive region that's under the influence of, like I said, a placebo anesthetic. It's really not as pleasant as it sounds.

Turns out there's some scarring in there, possibly from an old high school injury, or excessive bicycle riding; I'm leaning towards a divine test on an order of magnitude that would elicit sympathy from Job.

Essentially the scar grew and started to close off the avenue, so to speak, and a piece tore free, hence the bleeding. To treat it the scarring needs to be "expanded". I ask the doc if that means like an angioplasty, with the little balloon you blow up and push the constricting tissue into the vessel walls.

Of course not. This expansion needs to be done using thin wire-type instruments with sharp, sharp edges. We make an appointment for two days later.

I'm not much looking forward to this procedure; I fear it will be exponentially worse than the diagnosis, but it's not one of those situations that can wait. The Fruit-of-the-Loom replacement budget alone is uncomfortable to contemplate.

The big day arrives, so I get in the car and start for the doc's office. I'm thinking I can use the traffic lights to work up some resolve, steel myself a bit. I'm in no hurry so I travel just under the speed limit. There's some traffic behind me, and when I get to Walnut Street the light's green, so I go on through. Up ahead I can see the light at Parkway Terrace, and it goes to green just as I approach, so I move right through the intersection. Again, just under the limit.

I'm not steeling myself much, but figure I can take a breath at Wilson Avenue because I never make that light; except for today. The car ahead of me is moving even more slowly than I am, throwing off my timing, and I cruise right through and on down to Adams Street, where I need to turn left. There's an arrow for that, and when I get there it's...green. Don't even tap the brake. I make the turn and there's someone behind me so I can't snail along to force a red light at Cooper Ave. like I wanted, and it's green when I get there. As a bonus, I receive a sharp stab of pain to remind me of where I'm headed.

I'm a little anxious now because I'm going to be early for my appointment and I'll have all kinds of time to think up all kinds of horrible scenarios; not that I can't do that in the car but at least I'm occupied with driving.

Bellman Way, green light.

Stark Ave., green.

Philips Street, green.

It's a little bit eerie. I've driven this town for over thirty years and this has never happened, ever. I think I can count on Hillside Place, though. The light's at the top of the hill, so you have to start from a stop and keep from rolling backwards. It's *always* red.

And yet, when I get there, it's green, like some kind of taunting, satanic Stephen King green that knows I don't want to get to where I'm going and is almost audibly displaying its schadenfreude.

Still have cars behind me so I can't stop. And now my destination is looming; I take a right and go through the next intersection, by now predicting a green light and I'm not wrong.

I park in the closest spot I can find and walk slowly to the office, taking my time but it's not far so I get there quickly. I check in and take a seat and have nothing to do but think up all kinds of horrible scenarios, so I get down to it.

Presently I'm called into...room two. The walls in here are green They give me a green antibiotic pill that's bigger than a Faberge egg and lay me down on the table and dose me with the placebo.

It's a three step procedure, with successively larger instruments being applied to the task. Each step takes around an hour and a half to complete, although afterward those durations were adjusted downward to about ten minutes total. But guess what happens if you move, or flinch? So I closed my eyes so hard I started to see spots. Green spots.

Finally I get to where I can leave. The doc says it might be a little uncomfortable driving, so I should lie down as soon as I get home. Deal. I small-step shuffle out to the desk to arrange the follow-up. And what did I do after this little tribute to Torquemada? I said thanks and gave them fifty bucks.

I gathered up what was left of my resolve and slid out to the car. Upon being seated I realized that the doc's understanding of "a little uncomfortable" was a clinic in understatement. I gritted my teeth and made for home.

Caught. Every. Red. Light.

Dale Harris

Escape to the Green Refuge

Angie lowered her camera, and studied the wistful, lifelike expressions on the children's faces. For a moment she imagined the blissful freedom of sailing out and about, through star-studded pathways . . .

"We've emptied the truck, Mrs. Todson." Angie startled at the sound of the deep voice.

"I didn't think you would finish so quickly. I meant to be back; sorry you had to search me out. " Angie smiled. Her new home was located on the edge of the green in a small town. It was located about fifty miles from her former home; she hoped that it would be far enough, without being too far.

Tony, the mover, said, "Be sure to alert me if you discover anything broken or missing. We have set up the bedroom as you requested in the larger bedroom that faces the green. There is a great view of the green and the Winkin, Blinken and Nod bronze monument from that window. Are you sure you do not want us to unpack some of the other items? We have the couch and living room furniture arranged as you requested."

"You've done enough. The rest I can get to at my leisure. Thanks so much, you did a great job," Angie said, as she shook his hand.

Angie lingered outside as the moving van pulled away. She watched it until it merged into the horizon and disappeared from sight. Angie turned to look at her new home. Her breathing rate increased, her heart was racing. She felt a bit nauseous and dizzy. "Stop it!" she said out loud. "I can do this!" The front porch looked inviting. The door was open.

Angie remembered the surprised and hurt look on her adult son, Jonathan's face when he drove up and saw the moving van at her house this a.m.

"Mom! What's this?"

"I think it is obvious, Jonathan. I'm moving to my new home."

“But I thought we decided you wouldn’t sell the house!”

“That’s what you and Teri decided, not me! This is my new address, “ Angie said as she handed him a small business card. “It’s a lovely, small two bedroom home located on the village green. I fell in love with it!”

Jonathan had taken the card, read it. As he stuffed the card into his pocket, he said, “ Mom, this is almost 100 miles from here! Why?”

“You’re exaggerating as always. It’s only 50 miles. I need to do this, Jonathan. This house is smothering me now, and so are you and your sister.

I have to leave now; give me a hug.”

Jonathan just stared at her, “I don’t even know who you are.” He turned, got in his car and drove away.

The memory made Angie sigh heavily. Tears of frustration filled her eyes.

Wiping the tears from her eyes, Angie stepped inside her new home. The moving men had neatly stacked the unpacked boxes at the edges of the rooms. Walking through the house to the sliding doors to the backyard, Angie stepped onto the small patio. Lovely green, lush foliage surrounded the yard, offering an oasis of peace from the world. This was one of the major selling points of this house for Angie. A few delicate wind chimes, left by the previous owner, tinkled sweetly in the gentle breeze. Angie felt herself relax as she scanned the lovely yard, and the beautiful flower beds. She loved gardening and was looking forward to working in these flowerbeds, adding and subtracting flowers as she desired. Angie smiled, “I can make this my home,” she thought. “Ted purchased our family home as a surprise over forty years ago, when I was pregnant for Teri. This home is *my* choice, not Ted’s, not Jonathan’s, not Teri’s, MINE!”

Angie’s thoughts were interrupted by the buzz of her cell phone. She glanced at it, and groaned.

“Hello?” Angie hated the way her voice sounded a bit fearful.

“Mother! You really did it, despite my specific instructions not to! I was just flabbergasted when Jonathan told me that you had decided to go ahead with this foolishness. I was hoping I could catch you before that truck unloaded all your belongings. Now it will be so much harder to get you back home where you belong.”

“Teri, I am not returning back home. I have already sold the house, and the new family will be moving in on Monday. “Angie hated the waver in her voice. Why was it so difficult to be forceful with her CEO daughter? Secretly, she was glad that Teri lived a few states away from her. That distance is what had given her the courage to go ahead with the purchase of this house. Her former home had sold very well. She would actually be living much more efficiently in this new home, and the taxes were very low compared to her previous home.

“I wish I could just reach through this phone and slap that smug face of yours! You actually sold the family home?” Teri’s shrill voice ranted. “How could you sell a home that was so full of wonderful family memories?”

Angie was surprised at the anger that boiled inside her. “If that house is so full of such wonderful family memories, why is it that you had not visited your home for the past five years? The only reason you found time to come home was to attend your father’s funeral, and then you only stayed one day, and you were on that darn phone of yours constantly! “

“So I am the one being attacked now? I am not the one who is acting like a spoiled child!” Teri ranted on. Angie ended the call. She loved the little surge of power that gave her. The phone immediately started buzzing again. Angie walked away from it, and wandered out onto the green.

A middle aged woman was near the monument in the center of the green.

She had set up a small easel and was applying finishing touches to a small painting of the monument of Winkin, Blinkin and Nod. Angie’s interest was piqued and she strolled over to see if she could get a peek. The painting was so excellent that it took Angie’s breath away.

“You have captured those children’s faces so wonderfully! “ Angie exclaimed. The woman turned to face Angie, and smiled.

“You are the new addition to our family on the green, aren’t you? “ Angie nodded. “My name is Molly Burgeson. I am one of the newer residents on the green. I just love this monument and wanted to see if I could capture those lovely children on canvas.”

Angie studied the water colored painting more closely. “I think you are doing an excellent portrayal of those children. I can see the wonder and excitement in their faces. I love this painting!”

“That settles it then. I’ll just have to give it to you as a welcoming gift,” and Molly gingerly picked up the painting and handed it to Angie.

“Oh, Molly! I could never accept this! It is too beautiful for words, but I do love it. Can I purchase it from you?” Molly laughed a hearty laugh.

“I’ll tell you what. If you invite me into that new house of yours, and we have a cup of coffee together, AND you tell me why a few minutes ago you looked as if you wanted to kill someone, then we can consider the painting paid for in full. Deal?” Angie was surprised, but also pleased.

“That is certainly a deal! “ As they strolled toward Angie’s house, she asked, “Which house on the green is yours?”

“I live only two houses away from yours; in that misty blue colonial revival-era cape. I love the dormers.”

“I noticed that house when I came to meet the realtor for my house. It is beautiful.” “Thanks, I just love it. What is your name, by the way? Because I can tell, you and I are going to be great friends.”

Angie was pleased, as she knew instinctively she was going to like this woman very much. “My name is Angie Todson. My husband died eight months ago after a long battle with

Alzheimer's Disease. My grown children started acting as if they had to make all my life's decisions for me now, and I just could not stand it any longer. I had to get out! "

Molly was nodding her head. "Ah, yes, we are truly kindred spirits. I am so glad you have arrived here. Together we can make our lives very meaningful, and we can snub our noses at those know-it-all children of ours. My husband died of esophageal cancer six months ago. Even though we had lived in our house for over thirty years, it was so lonely without him. Everywhere I looked, I was reminded that he was no longer here. I am so glad that I moved here. I love living on this green, and the people in this town are so receptive and friendly. My children are still angry at me, but even they can see that I am much happier now.

I also know that they are secretly relieved that they do not have to come to bolster me up on a weekly basis. "

As they walked together back toward Angie's house, Angie held out the painting to admire it again. "I am so happy you are giving me this painting. I just love it. I love the idea of sailing among the stars."

"Do you paint, Angie?" Molly inquired.

"I try to paint. I have a lot to learn. You paint beautifully."

"That is what I did for a living. I was an art professor. I taught art at the local college. I have retired now. I also enjoy photography."

"Really? Now *that* is what I do for a living. I am a professional photographer."

When they walked into Angie's house, the phone was buzzing again. Angie ignored it. She quickly relayed to Molly the conversation that had occurred between her and her daughter, Teri. Molly smiled, shaking her head slowly.

As Angie made them some coffee, and pulled out a tin of cookies she had made for the moving men, Molly said, "I think you should text Teri and tell her that you will call her in

the morning, but that you have an interesting companion visiting right now. “ Molly laughed that great laugh that Angie was already beginning to love.

Angie took a few minutes to text that exact message to her daughter, Teri.

The phone began to buzz immediately, but Angie simply turned it off. She felt stronger already.

Helen L. Leet