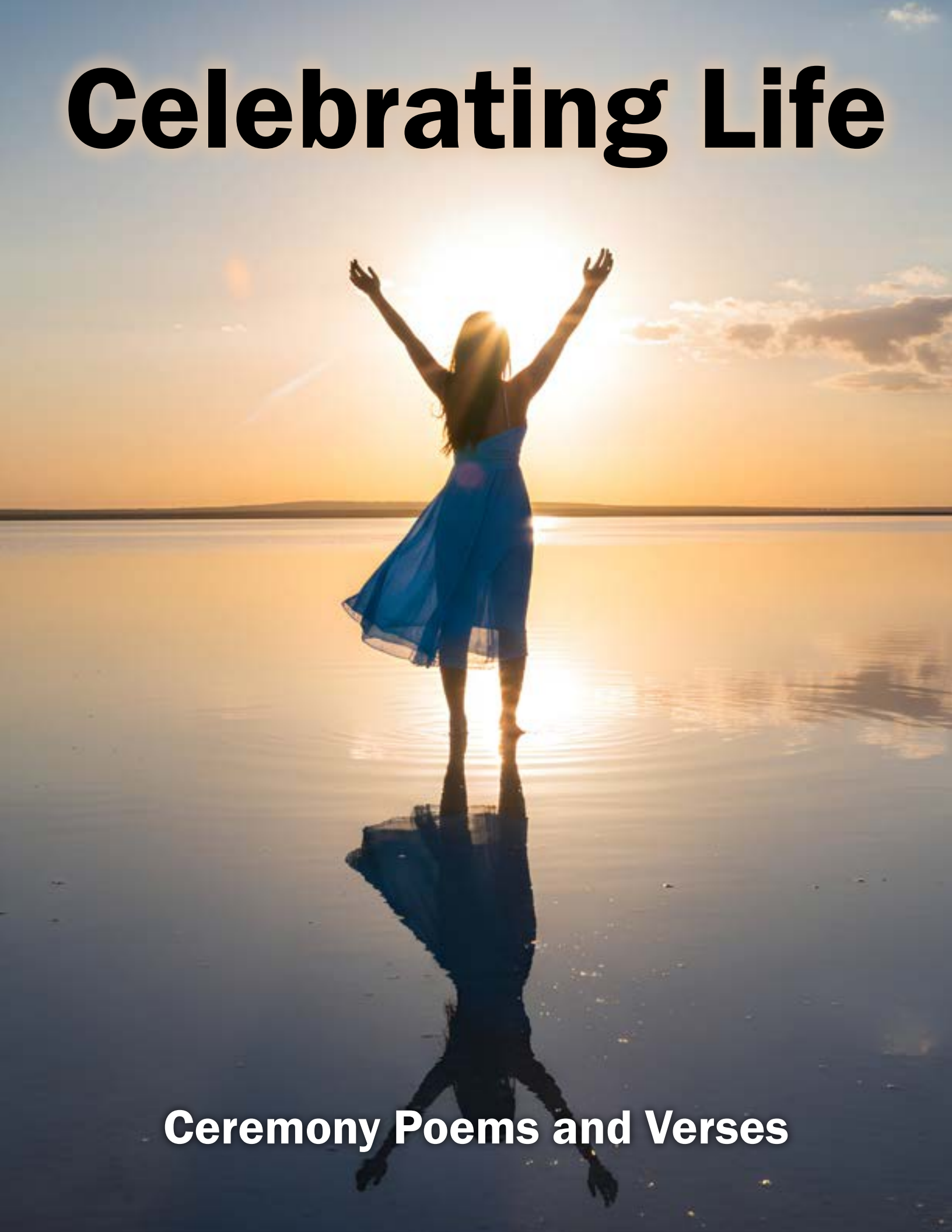
Celebrating Life



Ceremony Poems and Verses

Thanks to Linda Ellis for the poem The Dash, the inspiration for many of these poems and verses.

The Dash

Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the tombstone
from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of birth
and spoke the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
that they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them
know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own,
the cars...the house...the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
to consider what's true and real
and always try to understand
the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives
like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
and more often wear a smile,
remembering that this special dash
might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read,
with your life's actions to rehash...
would you be proud of the things they say
about how you spent YOUR dash?

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FUNERALS/CELEBRATIONS OF LIFE

“A Time To”

...Ecclesiastes-3, 1-8

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,

a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,

a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,

a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,

a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,

a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace...And a time to say Farewell!

A Psalm of David

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

He refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Waves

© 2025 Randy R. Stratton

All the waves in my life
Here they come there you go

He was the first to pass
Not who we thought would go
He will not be the last
It's not for us to know

They started at his passing
First a joke then a story
We waved at him from the water
And met him on the shore

We thought we had time
But he never picked up
We were all concerned
Our worst fears realized

He said he was afraid
It wouldn't go away
Finally it got him
They found him the second day

No more weekly calls
No more birthday checks
No more sudden guffaws
No more, all has left

He was the first to pass
Not who we thought would go
He will not be the last
It's not for us to know

All the waves in my life
Here they come there you go

Dedicated to the life and memories of Neil Diament

The Hole In Your Heart

© 2024 Peter J. Meschino

Don't ever forget them
Even though you're apart
Let their beautiful memory
Fill that hole in your heart

I'm not the only one
Who has lost someone they love
All dearly departed
Now in heaven above

Some were our elders
Who lived a very long time
Others left us too early
With no reason or rhyme

It doesn't really matter
When or why they depart
Each one of them leaves
A big hole in our heart

Dealing with loss
Is hard every day
Everyone handles it
In their own different way

Some become troubled
And struggle each day
Others move forward
Without much to say

Grieving is a process
That doesn't happen overnight
No one can tell you
What's wrong or what's right

Keep them alive
In your thoughts, hold them dear
Speak to them often
As if they're still here

Don't ever forget them
Even though you're apart
Let their beautiful memory
Fill that hole in your heart

The Last Of The Firsts

© 2025 Peter J. Meschino, Randy R. Stratton

A year has passed by quickly
Can't believe how this still hurts
Especially on this final day
The last one of the firsts

An old friend once told me
It takes at least one year
To endure the firsts we hold so close
Dates we cherished when they were here

The Firsts appear
Scattered throughout the year
It's at these times no matter where
The loss becomes so clear

We are reminded of those we've lost
In many different ways
A photograph, a song we hear
Especially on certain days

The first time birthdays come
And they are not around
We think of them with heavy hearts
Trusting peace is what they've found

Christmas is not the same
Since they have gone away
The laughter and the joy still there
Yet appear in bittersweet ways

Holidays and milestones
Continue to roll on by
Each one of them is different
As we look towards the sky

A year has passed by quickly
Can't believe how this still hurts
Especially on this final day
The last one of the firsts

The Circle Is Unbroken

Dedicated to the Life and Memories of Luca Venanzio Gravina

The Dime

© 2024 Randy R. Stratton

By the light of the moon
Listening to a show tune
Dancers on my mind
We find another dime

We found the first dime
On the night that was her last
Picked up on hospital floor
Would find many more after she passed

She danced for soldiers
Distracting their minds
All the while
We find another dime.

We find them in strange places
Gambling halls and hotel towers
Store them in the sacred case
Next to her family and flowers

She is always watching
Her spirit never failing
Family always thinking
Honour her daily

By the light of the moon
Listening to a show tune
Dancers on my mind
We find another dime

Her grace and gentleness
Never forgotten.

Dedicated to Life and Memories of Kathleen Mary (Kay) Westlake

A Precious Gift (Wise Elders)

© 2025 Peter J. Meschino

Don’t waste this precious gift
So generously given to you
Their knowledge and their wisdom
Is tried and tested and true

Had a meaningful visit
A very special day
Should be doing this more often
But life gets in the way

When I first started connecting
To the elders that I know
I was doing it for them
Not knowing the seeds that it would sow

A small and simple gesture
Like a call on the phone
Made them still feel wanted
And a little less alone

I have enjoyed many conversations
With people older than me
And soon I came to realize
What I had yet to see

It took a little time
But now I can clearly see
I received much more from them
Than they received from me

Sitting there and listening
Staring deep into their eyes
The lines that cross upon their face
Signify the roadmap of their lives

I can’t not stress enough
To listen but also hear
A life is measured in memories
Not simply in years

So when someone older speaks to you
Listen to what they have to say
Hold their hand as they held yours
And cherish every day

Don’t waste this precious gift
So generously given to you
Their knowledge and their wisdom
Is tried and tested and true

Cardinal

© 2018 B.Wood, D. Harvey

There's a lovely little Cardinal Lady, who visits every day
Hanging on the backyard branches, she's got a lot to say
The Mi'kmaqs have got a saying and I believe it's true
The cardinal is a visit from a loved one, I named her after you.

Sitting right outside my window
Bringing me the daily news
And in her song I hear your laughter
Everyday I'm close to you.

She's a very early morning riser, who finds her way
Gathering all her friends together, then she flies away
Oh the memories she brings me, oh the laughter, too
That pretty little cardinal lady, she is just like you.

Quiet, early morning chatter
All the love we had to share
Knowing you would always need me
I always thought that you'd be there, Cardinal.

There's a lovely little Cardinal Lady, who visits every day
Hanging on the backyard fence with so much to say.

Dedicated of life and memory of Margaret (Wood) Young

Listen to the Song

Until We Meet Again

© 2018 Bill Wood

May the wind be at your back
May the sun shine down upon your face
May the only tears you cry
Be the tears of happiness.

May the love inside your heart
Carry you wherever you go
May the laughter and your smile
Go on and on.

Until we meet again; Until we laugh again
Until that reunion; Here is my heart.
I don't know where it leads
But the road is stretching out before us.
Until we meet again, here is my heart.

May the ones you leave behind
Learn to love like you have loved
All the lives you've touched
Keep that fire burning bright

May the memories we hold
Never fade or blow away
May the love inside your heart
Go on and on.

Until we meet again; Until we dance again
Until that reunion; Here is my heart.

I don't know where it leads
But the road is stretching out before us.

Until we meet again, here is my heart.
Until we meet again, here is my heart.

Dedicated of life and memory
of Margaret (Wood) Young

Listen to the Song

More Than

© 2019 Michelle Sim

You are more than a body that just had to quit.
You are more than a mind that spewed out great wit.
You are more than a wife who partnered in all,
And more than a mom who answered the call.

You are more than a sister, a patient, a friend.
More than a grandma, who loved till the end.
You are more than a fighter who wouldn't take much
And more than a hostess with just the right touch.

You are wonderful and specifically unique.
Though greatly challenged, you never stayed bleak.
Created by God for your brief life's span,
You, Lovely One - you, Champion – you became
More Than.

A poem in honour of Margaret "Jean" Grieve
November 11, 1940 – April 24, 2019

Death Is Nothing At All

© 1910 Henry Scott Holland

Death is nothing at all
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.
I am I, and you are you,
and the old life that we lived so fondly
together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we
are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak of me, in the easy way which you
always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed at the little
jokes that we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word
that it always was.
Let it be spoken without an effort, without
the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute and unbroken continuity.
What is this death but a negligible
accident?
Why should I be out of mind because I am
out of sight?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval,
somewhere very near,
just round the corner.
All is well.
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was
before.

How we shall laugh at the trouble of
parting when we meet again!

Sing You Home

© 2008 Ennis Sisters

Lyrics by Maureen Ennis and Mark Murphy

Too soon to leave this earth
How could all your work be done
Ash to ash and dust to dust
Seemed to me you just begun

When grief invades my soul
There's comfort in a prayer, I find
Though these candles honor you
They burn for those you left behind

I'll sing for you because I need to
Right now this is all I now
You always said you wanted me to
So I will sing you home
I will sing you home

Know that you will live
On the lips of those who knew
What it was you had to give
And what it was they learned from you

This is my prayer for you
And maybe someday I will know
If it helped your journey home
Or if it helped me let you go

I'll sing for you because I need to
Right now this is all I now
You always said you wanted me to
So I will sing you home
I will sing you home

We're born unto this earth
Generations one by one
Ash to ash and dust to dust

There is nothing left undone
I'll sing for you because I need to
Right now this is all I now
You always said you wanted me to
So I will sing you home
I will sing you home

Listen to the Song

WEDDINGS

Time Travelers

© 2024 Terah Cox

May you take on the world together
with all your hopes and dreams,
may you be each other's anchor
in smooth or rocky seas.

May you bend to the world's winds
and brave stalls and storms,
may you find common ground
in all its changing forms.

May you cross stubborn boundaries
and turn many a stone,
may you find haven for your souls,
may you have heart and home.

And if some days are grey
and some nights are long and cold,
May you be each other's sun and moon
as your destinies unfold.

And should you lose sight of each other
and start to drift apart,
may you circle back by following
the compass of your hearts.

Paul's Letter to The Corinthians

Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence.

It believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

Love (Seasons of Love)

© 2026 Randy R. Stratton

The seasons change
When the Earth
Changes position relative
To the Sun

People change
When we
Change position relative
To themselves

When you find someone
Who always sees the real you
And does not change
You have found a Love
For All Seasons

The Art of Marriage

© 1961 Wilferd A. Peterson

A good marriage must be created.
In the marriage, the little things are the big things.
It is never being too old to hold hands.
It is remembering to say “I love you” at least once each day,
It is never going to sleep angry.
It is having a mutual sense of values and objectives.
It is standing together and facing the world.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each person can grow.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is not only marrying the right person
It is being the right partner.

The Bridge Across Forever

© 1984 Richard Bach

A soulmate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soul mate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soul mate is the one who makes life come to life.

Wedding Song (There Is Love)

© 1969 Paul Stookey

He is now to be among you at the calling of your hearts
Rest assured this troubadour is acting on His part.
The union of your spirits, here, has caused Him to remain
For whenever two or more of you are gathered in His name
There is Love, there is Love.

A man shall leave his mother and a woman leave her home
And they shall travel on to where the two shall be as one.
As it was in the beginning is now and til the end
Woman draws her life from man and gives it back again.
And there is Love, there is Love.

Well then what's to be the reason for becoming man and wife?
Is it love that brings you here or love that brings you life?
And if loving is the answer, then who's the giving for?
Do you believe in something that you've never seen before?
Oh there is Love, there is Love.

Oh the marriage of your spirits here has caused Him to remain
For whenever two or more of you are gathered in His name
There is Love, there is Love.

Listen to the Song

Let Me Be The One

©1995 Rik Emmett

Who will vow to have and hold you
Love you more than words can say?
Who will build their world around you
And stand beside you all the way?
When you need a friend you can rely on
A shoulder you can cry on
Who will pick you up when you fall
Who will come running when you call
Who'll be there for you
When all is said and done?
Let me be the one

Who will help you write the pages
In the story of your life?
And who will promise you tomorrow
Every single time you kiss goodnight?
Who will love you always and forever
As you face this crazy world together?
Who will make you smile through your tears
And who'll share all your secret fears?
Who'll wake up beside you
When each mornin' comes?
Let me be the one

Let me be the one your heart will know
The partner of your soul
The one who laughs and cries with you
The one who lives and dies for you

Listen to the Song

Come And Dance With Me

© Michelle Sim SOCAN 1999

Come, come and dance with Me my Bride
Turn your face, and look into my eyes
Fall, fall into My arms of love
Come, come and dance with me.

You walk toward Me, you've been wooed by My love
The Spirit oil spilling over your gown
Your eyes fixed on Mine, I re-
Move the veil. YES! It's time!

Come, come and dance with Me my Bride
Turn your face, and look into my eyes
Fall, fall into My arms of love
Come, come and dance with me.

The guests are here. They have come from the fields
They're not sure why, but feel compelled to kneel
Looking up they see The Groom! His...
Glory fills the room! (And He sings...)

Come, come and dance with Me my Bride
Turn your face, and look into my eyes
Fall, fall into My arms of love
Come, come and dance with me.

Come, come and dance with me.

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Listen to the Song

Law of Love

1914 Beinsa Duona (Peter Dunov)

"The Law of Love is the most essential principle. It brings harmony, unity, and an unbreakable bond between two souls, guiding them on their shared journey. This love is universal, connecting us to the divine in all creation—in the light, the stone, the tree, the grass, and everything surrounding us. Love, love is God, God is love."

Contributors

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Thanks to all these amazing folks for their time and inspiration.

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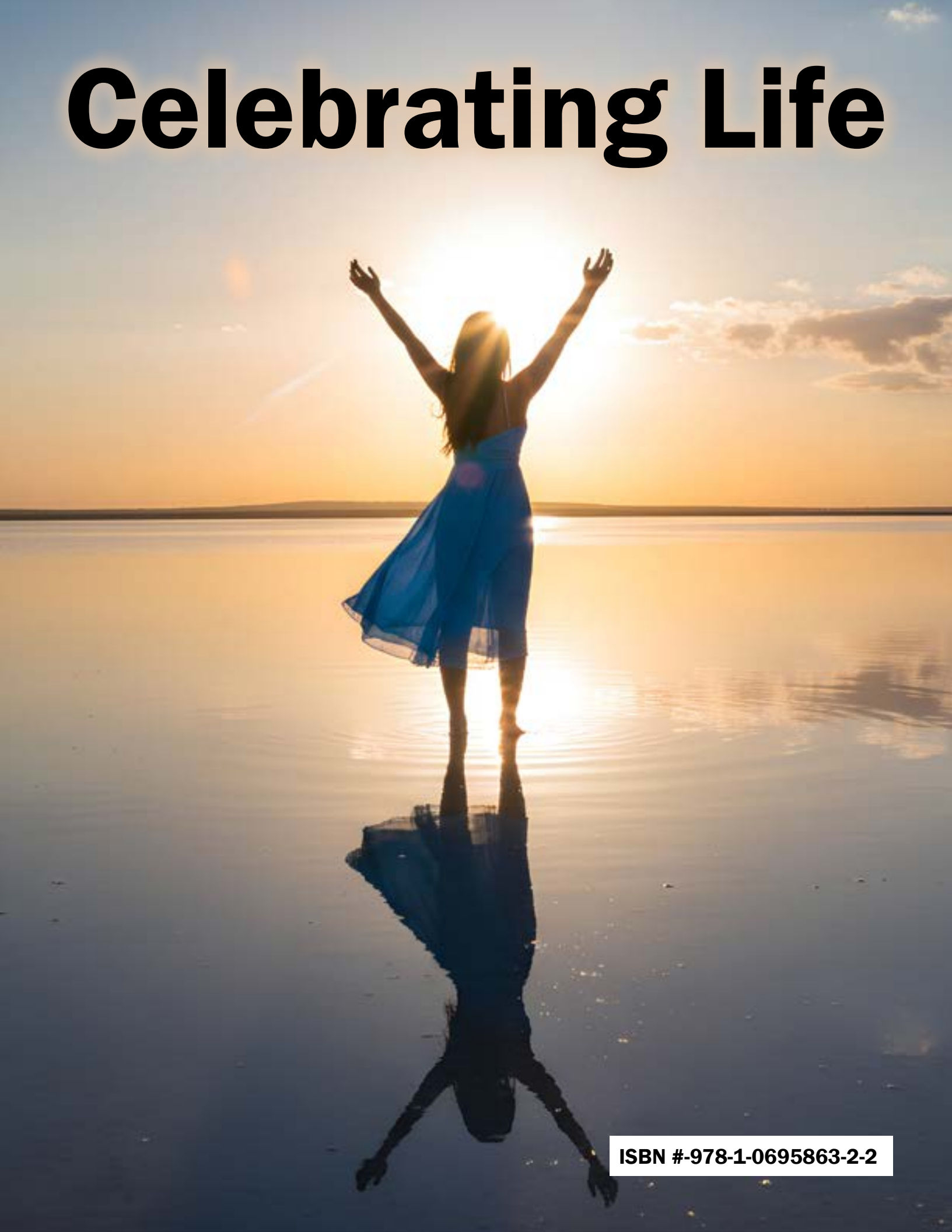
- Pete and Randy

2026 Rosie, Maggie, Clare (RMC) Productions

Notes

Notes

Celebrating Life



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