

**A Ballad for Dorothy
Commemorating her 70th Birthday
Recited on 3 March 2001**

Four score and 10 years ago, to be precise,
James and Ann Moffet took a very great care
To mix sugar and spice and everything nice
As they gave birth to this Dorothy Claire.

Now, Dorothy, did not have to grow up alone,
Even though the times work quite lean;
Her parents, good Irish, tried to start up a clan:
Brothers Jimmy and Jerry, and sister Helene.

The city of brotherly love was her home
Once the Moffets moved down there from Nicetown,
And they settled on Woodlawn, and then on McMahon
In the working class section of Germantown.

Her childhood was, well, I have little to say,
Though I've tried to get info for years.
So I'm tempted to tell you some stories today
That are humorous, but pure fabrication.

But rather than tell a fictitious account
And ascribe to her things she's not done,
The little I know I can use to recount
A story that's plain and homespun.

What I can say is this: she was a loving lass
And a superior pupil in school,
And her Catholic upbringing had her going to mass
On a very rigorous schedule.

And as the war raged and as goods became scarce,
She did what she could for the cause:
Her red wagon she filled without any fanfares
With tin, iron, aluminum, rubber, and gauze.

When she came of age, it was time to find work
For the family could not make ends meet.
So she picked up on jobs, such as sales clerk.
Working at Woolworths was really a treat!

She toiled for months in that old five-and-dime
And pulled minimum wage for many an hour.
But this was just a way of passing time
Until she landed a better job at Sarasota Flour.

But work was hardly her raison d'être,
She wanted from life something much better.
So on weekends with friends she would go out to dance
And look for a guy who would promise her romance.

One night, when the stars were shining their brightest,
A guy from West Philly passed her sight-for-sore-eyes test:
His hair was slicked back and his suit was quite stylish
And his eyes were quite dark: was he possibly Jewish?

And his name was Weintraut! What a curious sound!
An Irish girl with that name would certainly dumbfound!
Yet, despite her misgivings, Cupid got to her head:
It was clear from the start that this Dot loved her Ed.

After months of sweet courting and dances aplenty,
Ed made his big move when Dot had turned twenty
And promised his love, and here did not falter
When Dot waited for him at the Catholic church altar.

It goes without saying that their marriage has been stronger
Than most of their peers, and it will shortly last longer.
Their love for each other is worthy of cheers:
In three months they will have been married for forty-nine years!

But now I digress! In year 52
The knot was tied and sealed with glue.
And in the next year the young couple was blessed
by the birth of a son—a bad verse writing pest.

At this point what ever career aspiration
She harbored were put on a shelf.
She resolved then and there, without compensation,
To do all for her family and less for herself.

While Ed took care of the store and the business,
Dot took care of most every thing else.
She would stay all day long at home with the kids' mess
And manage the affairs of the house.

Her chores around the house were quite exhausting,
And rarely were they've that much fun.
As hard as she worked, she was never caught boasting:
For she knew "A woman's work is never done!"

So she took care of the ironing and cleaning and shopping,
And wash dishes and clothes; there was no hope of stopping.
She checked the kids' homework, corrected their misses,
And healed their bruises with her magical kisses.

And she cooked! My, she prepared royal repasts:
Two meats, three vegetables, and four kinds of drink,
And butter and margarine, white bread and wheat,
And plenty of desserts round the table were passed.

She took care of our bodies and took care of our minds.
She inspired us to read, and as older as we grew,
To make us aware of the plight of mankind
She froze her radio dial to KYW (*sing: newsradio, 1060*).

Throughout her whole life she's exhibited without fail
A strength of character which inspires and deserves our respect.
But most of all, she has shown how to prevail
When life deals a hand that you didn't expect.

For children she bore in a span of twelve years
And as they were all boys, all just fit to order.
But her fervent desire, and she made this most clear,
Was to give birth to at least one beautiful daughter.

At the moment of birth Mom knew something was wrong.
Cindy suffered a condition that would affect her lifelong:
Arrested development would be the result
And for this Mom would suffer emotional tumult.

She had hours of denial, weeks of demoralization,
She had months of despair and years of frustration.
But despite the great challenge that Cindy presented,
Mom stood by her side and would never resent it.

And perhaps this is what deserves our admiration foremost:
Lesser mortals like me would have, in desperation,
Opted quite swiftly for institutionalization.
But my mother has character stronger than most.

Consultations with doctors and clergy improved futile.
They could only substantiate her very worst fears,
But mom mustered up her own courageous profile
And nurse Cindy through life now for thirty-four years.

And Cindy's not the sole one she gives such devotion.
Her love knows no bounds, like the rich river Nile,
And she dotes on us subtly, without much commotion,
On her sons and their spouses and her grandchildren nine.

Will you get more grandkids? I doubt that it's real,
'cause Berta says "no" and I think Trish agrees
And I'm not sure you should place bets on Steve and Denise.
Perhaps your last hope is for Janet and Neil.

What else can I say? Nary a hobby nor craft had she.
Her time she spent caring for others.
In the Guinness Book of World Records she should be
Described as one of the worlds greatest mothers.

And I doubt there will be any change in this text
As she starts up her seventieth year:
She selflessly lives from one day to the next
With unflappable spirits and ebullient cheer.

On that note I would be remiss to ignore
Two traits that endanger all rafters:
Her sonorous, Earth-rattling habit to snore
And her uncontrollable loud bursts of laughter.

Some people give up by their seventieth year,
But Mom here has staked out a brand new career.
Sure, think that I'm crazy, but so much is true:
This senior has explored ground that's so new!

While sitting at home she's discovered a job
Where no mortal could possibly best her:
Somebody, please tell Mr Steve Jobs
That she's an awesome iMac software tester!

It's true! Just ask Steve! This woman, with ease,
Has found out by folder-clicking madly each day
How one can bring an iMac to its knees —
No one else on earth has ever found a way!

Your zest for life astounds! And this I admire.
Weak knees and sore feet don't put out your fire.
Though you might shrink in size, you still grow in stature
In our eyes. Your spirit we should capture.

To conclude: we are assembled today at this celebration
To honor a woman worthy of our emulation.
Your loving has been selfless and boundless, that is for sure,
And we hope that you'll love us still seventy years more!