

Appendix B. Remembered Lines

Some lines Jo wrote for either book reviews or as drafts for letter-writing. Looking over what she garnered from her great and wide knowledge of books puts a certain perspective on what she loved, what she thought about, what she considered important or worthy. It really gives us a glimpse into the heart and mind of a great connoisseur of words and it certainly provided much background material for her sparkling conversation, a trait that stayed with her to the end.



Of the following quotes that Jo recorded some seem a bit obscure, but some of them are such gems that most of them have been included. Some acknowledge the author, other don't:

"It lies in wait like a recurrent illness and sometimes quite unexpectedly the old familiar pain will surge over you. The desperate longing will so engulf you that nothing on earth matters but the urgency of your need."

"My knowledge of baseball is so abysmal that it is so Marty finds teaching me uphill work."

"It's the kind of thing they must serve in Heaven on Easter morning with God in full-dress uniform and the trumpets blowing."

"Though we told the truth, it was not always whole and nothing-but."

"Those whose egos are such that they are sullen and ill tempered when they are not the focus of attention..."

"Bridge is antisocial, doncha think? Why is it some of the stupidest people play it with great éclat?"

Short story: "A relationship that was predicated upon love was far too delicate of composition to be threatened by cross purposes. Her dignity trampled to death, her honor mutilated, she fought back and felt estranged from the very principles of her being."

From John Donne's poem: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee."

Oliver Wendell Holmes: "There is always an urchin at the edge of every triumph, Wendy, to remind you your crown isn't on straight."

"Changing one's whole suit of friends leaves moments when man feels naked and shivers."

"Faith is the bird that sees the light when the dawn is still dark."

"[There is] a calmness I've not known for a long, long time. I've striven and prayed and despaired with myself. Strangest of all, that which may seem dark and disastrous is like nature's child in the womb, the beginnings of the somehow and ultimate good. [His] patter, pun and flattery had so little to concern itself with that it was deeply concerned in observing and criticizing the affairs of others. [He] studied the obvious and commented on it, arriving at a sort of petty and distorted conclusion... If you drank, he assumed you drank too much... charitable with all the uncharity of the complacent Christian. Don't we all cry out sometimes to go berserk by imbibing in malicious and cruel gossip? Have we any right to condemn anyone for anything?"

"...Loved a man grown so big and she feared to find him grown little. He was troubled by dreams of strange women, by senseless lionization that eluded him, by thwarted vanities, unaccomplished drama, a self that felt robbed of the ambitions things that might have been. A woman may be too prudishly exacting or too sweet. She found herself filled with sudden strange pity for the man who had wounded her. Performers are of all people the most dangerous and destructive. Their sincerity may be so over-sincere, like many platform virtues, it becomes hum-bug."

All of the above was handwritten on the back of a large envelope postmarked 1943 in Cripple Creek, Colorado. If she was getting ready for a book review, it has not been convenient to determine what book it was.

The following quotes were noted in her scrapbook:

"Mother: when she walks her clothes seem to become a part of her. She has the litheness, the extraordinary grace of a magnificent thoroughbred."

"Out of a variety of pictures in my mind two tableaux stand out. A third somewhat mischievously refuses to be forgotten."

"I feel so grand. I feel like a toy balloon, a bright red one."

In the scrapbook, under the heading of "ME" she wrote:

"I was sighing in my toes that day, I was so steeped."

"I know your head is bumping the clouds."

"Society with a capital S"

"A kiss or two for my own Janey"

"Cinderella without a God-mother"

"My stock is going up with you."

"It gave me the wooley-goos."

"My heart ran so fast it tripped itself."

“Pedigreed cur”
“I’m dizzy in the dome cogitating backwards and forwards.”
“My hand is so cold it’s turned to ice and I skid all over.”
“Lois turned with a stricken ‘thou too Brutus,’ look.”
“Wonderful, did anything ever happen so darn pat.”
“She slithers when she walks, she’s so snaky.”
“I wanted to hear loud and determined protestations—a litany of ‘you must not.’”
“It takes more baths for Marty than the Dionnes [famous quintuplets] I know. He went swimming the other day and stayed in 4 hours and simply can’t see why that won’t answer for two weeks of baths.”
“The answer was too bland and unnatural.”
“My, how she did plug Florida!”
“That would have put Robinson Crusoe to shame.”
“If I had been a shot like you, I think that cat Philharmonic would have been stilled forever.”
“My fly-paper memory”
“I’ve tried to build a wall around that memory, but sometimes memories are like ghosts that slip right through walls.”
“My eyes thirstily drank in the detail.”
“In the mountains I realize the majesty of God.”
“I wish I had a self sufficing, logical creed. Just certain facts are the buttresses of my faith.”
“Get your joy out of giving not getting.”

In preparation for a book review she jotted down the following notes under a page titled “Ad-lib:”

“He was so excruciatingly sensitive to the pain humans suffer in their harrowed flight across the earth, he could not knowingly inflict pain on others. His cryptographical mind penetrated the façade of spoken words, gestures, expressions. His evaluating apparatus was objectively hard, sharp and incisive.

“He was a Christian by example and pretext, but by intellect, an agnostic. His language was supple, vigorous, but never nervous. Perhaps a little more appreciation by others would forestall his compensatory egotism and give a better hold upon perspective and sanity. In retrospect his career seemed lonely, self-centered and barren. He was tottering on the very outside edge of his strength. Only by letting his emotions atrophy had he carried on.”

“At this moment you see all life with more equanimity as from the top of the hill where you have climbed. You can get proportions and perspective you can’t get struggling up.”

“One resolve: there shall be no slow decline, but a clean cut—no raw edges to fester. So on this beautiful morning, with a breaking heart, I walk out of your life.”

“The secret of the great professional is that he gives service above self.”

“I feel baleful at the sight of waste.”

In her scrapbook of quotes Jo wrote:

Tell Bobbie Jo, don’t ever let yourself accept a substitute for what you really want in life. It only brings a heartache.

Jo also wrote: "I don't know what this is from:"

The things they had to say were, after all, mostly incommunicable, after the manner of past things well understood...

A saying of Plato: *We lose what is certain while we pursue uncertainties.*

A few of her notes involved books or book reviews:

Gone With the Wind, by Margaret Mitchell

"The old days had no glitter but they had a charm, a beauty, a slow paced glamour."

"No one can go forward with a load of aching memories."

"A whisper and fragrance that was Ellen."

"Someday it will be without tenseness, without passion, to be there just as a loved friend."

Happy the Land, by Louise Rich

"He made a token protest."

"I would say he was right times two."

"She always sees my point of view and most of the time shares it. You can have a certain amount of fun alone, anywhere, but the same things are four times as much fun if you can count on someone laughing at the same things you laugh at, catching your most oblique references and thinking the same things important or sad."

"You are old enough and smart enough to realize you can never recapture what you once had. It's time to move on."

Past Imperfect, Joan Collins

"One has only to look at the stars by night, on the sea to know there is a power, a rhythm governing the universe, complex and infinite. "

"Personally I always feel nearer to the source when in the presence of a few certain people do seem to me to emit the divine from their personage than when in a pew being harangued from the pulpit, but for those who feel uplifted through a church, it's satisfying and necessary."

Thunder in Heaven, Armine Von Tempske

"In the final analysis he had a poor mangy soul focused on himself, on his personal achievements"

"It doesn't matter what happens to a person, but it matters a lot what they do about what happens."

"I feel as if I had come into a larger kingdom – more hours with my family, more hours to enjoy details of living."

"More than knowing, it was a nudge from God."

"Jam all the fun, joy and beauty possible into each day as it comes because no one can tell what might be ahead."

"Oh, God, make me brave! Make me strong! Make me believe no matter what, that life is beautiful, sound and worthwhile, and make me take whatever comes like a gentleman and a soldier."

"The success or defeat of a life depends not on what happens to you, but in what use you make of what happens."

"Your loving me has sort of loosed all the loneliness of my life."

The Human Comedy, William Saroyan

"When you leave this school—long after you have forgotten me—I shall be watching for you in this world, and I shall never be startled by the good things I know you shall do."

“Even though he himself did not know he had wept in his sleep, his spirit seemed hushed as the spirit of a man who is hushed after grief.”
“The evil do not know they are evil and are therefore innocent.”

No Hiding Place, William Seabrook

“More of my twisted desperations”
“You’re a good poker player, but you’re not a crook.”
“She was average dumb”
“Maggot-mass emerging from the subway exit”
“Bright and fresh as paint”
“Too dangled and deep”
“Gold-braided doormen in the formidable and snooty glory”
“It never mitigates the sadness of either in long retrospect to reflect that one or the other was more to blame. Both had tried and both had failed.”
“It had come out of something deeper and darker than reason and because it was unreasonable it couldn’t be reasoned away.”

They Came To a River, Allis McKay

“That was my youth. I took it in both hands and spent it gloriously. It is gone.”
“You don’t get to know these people in a day. Their lives run deep.”
“She had had enough—enough of everything. She wanted no more of this endless unfair struggle—the pointless striving just to stay alive. Let it all fall. It would be so easy to follow Nate. Her work was finished—her work had been to make Nate happy. It was finished, it did not need doing now and she was very tired. There was no escape. Life had her as inexorably as death had Nate.”

The Little Locksmith, Katherine Butler Hathaway

“I suffered consciously from a starved and desolate feeling, as a person must who is living on a diet which is very good, yet lacks one vital element that his system needs and craves. I felt starved and dumb and alone, because as usual I could not speak of my suffering to anyone.”
“It was something you simply couldn’t explain. Its tie, its fascination, its incommunicable use began then the endless conversation that went on weeks, months, years. The thing that struck me was the loneliness of her mind...”
“Perfection and imperfection are both included in the universe and I had good reason to make friends with imperfection...”
“When anger was not able to explode it flooded my interior in a heavy, unhappy, sullen silence.”

Cross Creek, Marjorie K. Rawlings

“I do not know the irreducible minimum of happiness for any other spirit than my own...”
“It seems to me I’ve done nothing in all my life to deserve that outhouse, but it’s not to be denied it does have a certain coziness—always a Monkey [Ward’s] catalog to wish along with...”
“It was so delicious I heard angels singing in the distance...”
“The warmth of being watched over and cared for...”
“Life would not be the same if that small bright flame of loving devotion was put out...”
“All of us, no matter how self-reliant, long, I think, for tenderness...”

Pardon My Harvard Accent, William G. Morse

“The man, woman or child who has met life, cruel life, knows something that one who has not met reality knows...”
“They had passed the tonsil and adenoid stage...”
“Indefinable oomph...”
“With the expression on his face indicating that the milk of human kindness had turned sour...”
“Her compelling gaze was meant to freeze and quell...”

“Sometimes I feel sure down deep in each of us is a secret shyness. The bold child, the fresh salesman, the aggressive, boisterous man, each is a cover-up with every defense he can muster [to hide the] tender spots in himself which he cannot bear for others to see...”

A Time for Silence, Andre Maurois

“And then, too, words prolong and preserve sorrows that should have long been forgotten. Animal nature forgets. Take my own case, yes, there was a frightful tragedy in my life, but because it had always remained silent, it is almost foreign to me now, and now should I bring it to life a mournful dialogue [would ensue] between Valentine and me that would probably not end till we die. Why torture each other?”

Josh, Marcia Friedman

“His commitment simply hadn’t been great enough; he hadn’t been generous and understanding enough to overcome the problem posed by the situation; he hadn’t put his brother’s obvious need ahead of his own distaste and guilt and distress at Josh’s illness. It demanded a maturity great than he possessed. He couldn’t accept the reality of Josh’s diminished capacity.”

Forty Years a Country Preacher, George B. Gilbert

“God seldom speaks straight to a man. He speaks to him through people.”

Biography, Jane Welsh Carlyle

“There was a time in my own life when I felt that unless I strove against the feeling with all my strength and might, I should be crazed outright. I passed through that time safely. I was able to fight it out, and not to let myself go. People can help themselves, that I am convinced of, and that fact is not nearly enough dwelt upon.”

In the biography of actress, Katharine Cornell:

“Yesterday was her 40th birthday which is like saying tulips are up in Madison Square. She’s a flutter-fidget. Her home has pictures on the wall you can look at without a slide rule, a fireplace that burns wood and in a corner a speck of dust which is fine and livable and Cornelian.”

Where Stands a Winged Sentry, Margaret Kennedy

“In these preposterous times the most valuable thing to have is the power of adjustment, adaptability, quickness to grasp and adjust to new things.”

“She was over the moon to see him.”

“David and I put on our tidy clothes and our most staid expressions.”

“All virtues in human intercourse must spring from simplicity, dignity, delicacy, consideration for others, the power to disagree without becoming offensive and to be disagreed with without taking offense.”

“I blew up with a wealth of dynamic vituperation which was almost pre-war.”

“My skin crawled on my bones.”

“It’s bad when he reads funny books, but now he’s sunk to a lower depth of imbecility and pretends he’s Superman.”

“Hitler may win, but please God, we’ll give him a pounding he’ll never forget.”

Alice Palmer [Possibly from Twenty Modern Americans]

“Swift responsiveness and a kind of spendthrift generosity have ever been faults of admirable women.”

“To renew myself mountains are important—their poise, solitude and freedom from affectation.”

“I asked her a question, but she developed one of those little attacks of hurry.”

“A specific case of love or adoration humbles me. Love is a present for a mighty king.”

“When she wrote every sentence concerned just him and no one else, his family, his business, his perplexities, his previous falls or rise, the wisest steps by which he may now reach his ends, the assurance someone cares for his success and is elated over his little advances.”

“Her abounding soul found its full delight in relieving souls of others.”

*"You do not see a child grow from Sunday to Sunday; thus with all of us."
"In her the child and the woman were amusingly combined."*

Immortal Ease, Kathleen Coyle

"Marriage is so intimate. You have to belong, beat for beat and all the rest of it or possess some soluble that enables you not to belong..."

"She is the sort that has ripened with life and is full of wisdom..."

"She is the most affected human being I have ever met, Boston gentility at its worst..."

"She's too delicate to touch. Keeps putting both hands and both forefingers up to her back hair without touching it. I wonder she ever gets the hairpins in—audience behavior."

"These children tureen around your heart and they took the taste of other people out of you forever."

Testament of Friendship, Vera Brittain

"Don't you know your love and example are to me an everlasting inspiration and support? Don't you know I understand and am always close, close to you even though we are miles apart and though we do not write much or often!"

City of Illusion, Vardis Fisher

"Always wore a silk hat, a splendid and an empty gentleman—laughed purringly at no matter what."

"There was a handsome fop called The Baron because he was a descendant of a British peer. He affected a slouch hat, unpolished boots but he was one jump from a title and could afford to."

"Fred was a sly wolf of a man who was forever stumbling over his own greed. It drove him to do inexplicable things—cruel and inhuman things."

Hamlet, William Shakespeare

"Goodnight, sweet prince, and a flight of angels sing thee to thy rest."

One must keep in mind that all of the above notes were far more abbreviated than the notes Jo made for a full book review. In her files there were extensive notes amounting to many pages for each of the books she actually reviewed for audiences.

Quotes from a financier, an unnamed gentleman, who was evidently a very good friend of Jo's friend, Gertie, impressed Jo enough for her to note and quote him:

"Life marches on at such a rapid rate and is so full of challenging things that must be done 'day before yesterday.'"

"My bedroom is monk-like in comparison—a man's room built for utility. Imagine me a Colorado hillbilly at heart, circulating in such company in a dress suit. But it isn't so strange after all for a truer line was never written than Kipling's when he said, "Judith O'Grady and the Colonel's lady are sisters under the skin." For this old human race after all, by and large, all respond to the same appeals, think the same thoughts, enjoy the same emotions, etc. One must realize that the veneer of differences is a veneer after all."

"My association with the rich have convinced me of one absolute fact: the higher you go, the richer you become, the more responsibilities you have, the less your chance of personal happiness and more particularly, the lonelier you become."

Occasionally Jo would present programs that were not book reviews. Two such were: 'The artist, Ted DeGrazia,' undated, and in February 1980 for a women's group in Clovis: about Indian Jewelry, entitled "A Lot of Soul."

Jo would sometimes read or quote poems in her book presentations. The following were those that she saved and treasured:

FAITH

Mildred E. Luton in the P.E.O. Record

"I have no faith in men," you say.
No faith in men, my eye!
I saw you board a plane with ten
And ride across the sky.
"I have no faith in God," you wail.
No faith in God, indeed!
Why did you dig into the sod
And scatter flower seed?

PERSONALITY

by Louise Paine Benjamin, author of Why Men Like Us

Bright girls, with fascinating selves,
Are rarely left alone on shelves!
So, if you'd win romance or sable,
Behave this way if you are able.
Don't boast or boss or tell a dream
(They're pretty boring, it would seem)
Be cautions when you choose your jokes;
Laugh at yourself not other folks.
Be prompt, polite and don't pursue
The gun-shy lad who dodges you.
Be neat, be sweet, by very smart,
Be sought, because you look the part!

To the following was attached a note that said, "Sub [substitute teacher] sent this"

THE HAND OF YOU

by Carrie Jacobs Bond

Sometimes when shadows cross my path
As shadows sometimes do,
I reach my hand across the mist
And touch the hand of you.
I know the sun is in the sky,
I know true love is true,
But, oh, it comforts in the dark
To touch the hand of you.
Thru all the silence of the years,
Thru friendship old and new
The dearest memory of my life—
I touch the hand of you.
So clouds and shadows come along
We all must have a few—
But thru them all, please God, let me
Still touch the hand of you.

Attached to this poem was a note that read, "Written for me by a neighbor:"

It isn't the things you do
That makes you noble or grand,
But the spirit in which you do them
Is the thing that counts with man.

Just one little act of kindness
To some one whose lot is hard
Can win you a lifetime friend
If it really comes from your heart.

It's the little things in life that count
Be it a smile, a word, or a deed
Will either cheer a lonely heart
Or make that same heart bleed.

You sometimes meet with people
Whom you never saw before.
They seem to find a place in your heart
Like our neighbor that lives next door.

Little deeds of thoughtfulness
A cheery word or a smile
That's what makes us admire them
And really makes life worth while.

A PRAYER FOR POISE

by Dorothy Howard

Make me immune to little hurts
Unmindful of sharp, piercing pain,
Aware that others deeds and words
Can have no power to sting or maim
My spirit. So let me be constantly
Secure, serene, kind, loving, strong,
That I may live more perfectly,
Assured that life is good, not wrong.

FOUR DUCKS ON A POND [one of Jo's favorites]

From Song Cycle Branch of Arbutus, Needham

Four ducks on a pond
A grass bank beyond
A blue sky of spring
White clouds on a wing
What little wee things to remember with tears
To remember for years with tears – with tears.

TEARS

Donald Wayne Rash

Tears on the outside
Fall to the ground
And are slowly swept away.

Tears on the inside
Fall on the soul
And stay, and stay, and stay.

A WOMAN SITTING IN THE SUN

by Grace Noll Crowell

I saw her sitting in the sun
Beside her open door:
A woman with her work long done,
And something in the look she wore
Arrested me – it was so still,
So calm and quiet, and her eyes
Were cool and deep, and very wise.
I could not pass, my whole heart yearned
To know the secret she had learned.
I paused and watched her wistfully,
And glancing up, she smiled at me.

We sat together in the sun,
I told her my desire—
The fever of the days had run
Within my heart like fire.
She smiled, she said, “Child, I am old,
And there is little to be told,
Save this, I long since learned to know
That life is good, and if we go
Quietly at work or play,
Then there is strength for every day;
That if our need be small or great,
The help will come if we but wait.”

We sat together in the sun,
The woman who was very wise,
And I, who never shall forget
The words she said – her quiet eyes.

A CHURCH WORKER'S PRAYER

author unknown

O Lord, I come to Thee in prayer once more,
But pardon that I do not kneel before
Thy gracious presence, for my knees are sore
With so much walking. In my chair, instead,
I'll sit at ease and humbly bow my head.
I've labored in Thy vineyard, Thou dost know;
I've sold ten tickets to the minstrel show;
I've called on fifteen strangers in our town,
Their contributions to our church put down;
I've baked a pot of beans for Wednesday's spree,
An old-time supper it is going to be;
I've dressed three dolls, too, for our annual fair,
And made a cake which we must raffle there.
Now, with Thy boundless wisdom so sublime,
Thou knowest these duties all take time.
I have no time to fight my spirit's foes;
I have no time to mend my husband's clothes.
My children roam the streets from morn till night;
I have no time to teach them to do right;
But Thou, O Lord, considering my cares,
Will count them righteous and heed my prayers.
Bless the bean supper and the minstrel show
And put it in the hearts of all to go.
Increase the contributions to our fair,
And bless the people who assemble there;
Bless Thou the grab bag and the gypsy tent,
The flower table and the cake that's sent.
And when Thou has bestowed these blessings, then
We pray that Thou will bless our souls. Amen.

WHEN CHILDREN PRAY [this has also been set to music]

Beatrice Fenner

When children pray
All lovely things more lovely grow to be
All beauty more beautiful to see
All sweetness grows more sweet
All tenderness alike becomes more deep
New forces stir and waken from their sleep

When children pray
All growing things rejoice
And life's eternal hymn grows more profound
The love of all mankind more closely bound

When children pray
The voices of all living things are hushed
The world in all humility draws near
And God within His heav'n bends down to hear
When children pray.

SURPRISES

Esther F. Thom

Look for the lovely little things,
Like leaf buds on a tree,
Gray pussy willows,
Velvet moss,
A brown-striped bumble bee,
The pattern of a spider's web,
A robin's egg of blue,
Frail petals on a violet,
One crystal bead of dew.

God made delightful little things,
And placed them all around,
They are surprises of His love,
How many have you found?

NOTE LEFT ON A HUSBAND'S DESK

Margaret Neeley

I'm mad at you. Good-by, GOOD-BY!
You know the cause as well as I.
(Be sure to wear your new blue tie.)

I wouldn't change you if I could,
For mostly you are kind and good.
But sometimes, Dear, I THINK I would!)

You have that certain stubborn streak
That balks at truths of which I speak.
(Today, my patience reached its peak.)

Good-by, good-by FOR-EVER-MORE!
(I'll not be long. Don't lock the door.)

One final poem saved and treasured in Jo's scrapbook was, as she noted, given to her by Mary Shaeffer Thomas, Earl's sister:

Live in the sweetness of the now and take
Its essence to your lips to comfort you.
Then, though the end may cause your heart to break,
Some healing balm will come along with rue.

* * *