



*Returning  
Home*

## Returning Home

*My 7<sup>th</sup> little collection of poetry, made with gratitude to my Vipassana meditation teacher S. N. Goenka (1924-2013), and also gratitude also to my many Dhamma friends. Words and photo copyright 2025 by Craig Douglas Miller. Revised Oct. 13, 2025. More at [craigdmiller.com/poetry](http://craigdmiller.com/poetry)*

### C O N T E N T S

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| as we see it.....             | 3  |
| birthday twice.....           | 4  |
| plunging.....                 | 5  |
| returning home.....           | 6  |
| blessings, from the base..... | 7  |
| waterwheel.....               | 9  |
| guiding lights.....           | 11 |
| so many poems.....            | 12 |
| step forward.....             | 13 |

AS WE SEE IT

*“The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”*  
— William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

All i can see  
all i have ever seen  
is from the light  
in my eyes

I may have been foolish  
but i am trying to be  
Shakespearian wise

*CDM February 5, 2021*

BIRTHDAY TWICE

To the dear one  
who, per annum  
celebrates her birthday twice  
once in the sun, and once in the ice  
– may the softness of snow abound  
and the warmth of good friends prevail  
all around, all around!

*for Carole Anne*

*CDM December 26, 2012*

## PLUNGING

now,  
when things are stuck  
i recall the plumber  
who showed me  
how to really use a plunger –  
just how long  
and just how vigorously  
to plunge away

now,  
when mistakes  
are being made,  
i recall the carpenter  
who told me  
how skilled carpentry  
is not as much in the cutting  
as in the correcting

Now,  
I am gladdened  
inspired,  
to see you take action,  
working steadily,  
working vigorously,  
fixing the problems  
– please proceed,  
with all our good wishes  
correct the cuts,  
– plunge away!

*CDM September 30, 2019*

## RETURNING HOME

every day we pass away  
every day we a-rise  
seeing our former dwellings  
pass before us  
there is clinging, clinging  
to the beauty in our lives

then softening, softening  
because we know  
the beauty of living lightly  
letting go,  
arising, as light as sunshine  
we recall the joy  
of our new destination  
as we head towards  
*anicca, anicca*  
the dwelling  
of the wise

*CDM April 27, 2021*

*For Bruce, who has returned from his beautiful homeland*

BLESSINGS, FROM THE BASE

We were being served  
the top,  
the top  
like fine ladies and lords

but we were working  
the bottom,  
the bottom  
liken scrubbing old cold stone floors

and we were sitting around  
just sitting around  
like old folks  
but silently, silently,  
no complaints

we were just sitting around like children  
listening, listening,  
as Dhamma father  
encourages and explains

gratitude ran this course  
and the urge to serve  
is still in force

blessings to the servers and non-servers all  
blessings to the meditators and non-meditators all  
blessings of peace and happiness  
blessings of freedom  
freedom

*(...continued on next page..)*

...

blessings from the base  
to the high and the low  
to the young and the old

blessings

*a little maṅgalaṃ for Mettā Day at Dhamma Dharā  
CDM March 9, 2024*

## WATERWHEEL

*for Laura Sandvik*

It has been  
A river of friendship  
Ebbing and flowing  
Between us  
For decades now

But the time has come  
Your banks have burst  
You have moved on  
From this life  
And I feel  
Like a water wheel  
On an empty canal  
Just a little bit dry

Crops were grown  
Friendships sewn  
Houses built  
No secrets spilt  
We feel your love  
My friend  
And we know you feel ours

*(...continued on next page..)*

Community built  
Families grown  
So much good work known  
And I feel,  
I feel grateful  
And full of your friendship  
And neighborly love

But forgive me my friend  
A few tears might flow  
Because, you know,  
I feel, I feel,  
Like a water wheel,  
Having known the good flow  
Of a river of friendship —  
The great river has moved,  
And I, sobered, and  
and reflective, and  
Just a little bit dry

*CDM October 26, 2024*

## GUIDING LIGHTS

when our eyes are closed  
in the dark of night  
where there has been fear  
remember the moon  
remember the stars  
these are our guiding lights

when our eyes are open  
in the morning light  
remembering mother and father  
remembering our teachers  
and their good qualities  
these are our guiding lights

who sewed these clothes?  
who built this house?  
who farmed this food?  
neighbors going to work  
cargo crossing the ocean  
recalling the web of civilization  
recalling the civil  
respecting hard work  
one way to make us bright

there has been anger  
there has been fear  
there has been ego  
remember kindness  
remember compassion  
remembering humility  
these are our guiding lights

*CDM September 9, 2025*

SO MANY POEMS

so many poems  
occurred to me  
i did not write them down

the best poems  
have already occurred to us  
we are already singing them  
out loud

poems of love and friendship  
of truth and beauty  
of resilience and endurance  
of ordinary compassion  
and kindness

so many poems  
are happening every day  
we are sharing them silently  
by attending to others  
(just now)

*CDM March 11, 2018*

## STEP FORWARD

stepping forward

an ordinary step  
becomes extraordinary  
with lightness  
in the face of darkness  
with firmness  
in the face of evil  
with steadiness  
in the face of despair

step forward  
with kindness and compassion  
step forward  
again and again

stepping into the morning  
as the light comes  
and again  
into the night

*CDM September 9, 2025*