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In addition to writing poetry and her upcoming non-fiction book for poets, Michelle edited and contributed to two poetry anthologies: *Reflections: An Anthology of Poetry by Members of Poetic License Writers Group* (2005) and *In Katrina's Wake: An Anthology of Inspirational Poetry* (2005). She hosts an Internet radio talk show podcast called "Practical Poetry" in which she interviews published poets, poetry editors and others in the literary world. When there is no scheduled guest, she provides powerful poetry writing, publishing, promotional and business tips for poets. She is Editor-in-Chief of *True Poet Magazine*, an Internet webzine she founded in 2003. She presents poetry writing and publishing workshops at libraries, park districts and literary centers. She mentors high school students interested in a writing career. She organizes and hosts *WriterFest*, an annual event where aspiring writers learn valuable writing, publishing and promoting tips from local published authors. She belongs to a number of local, regional and national writers groups and organizations.

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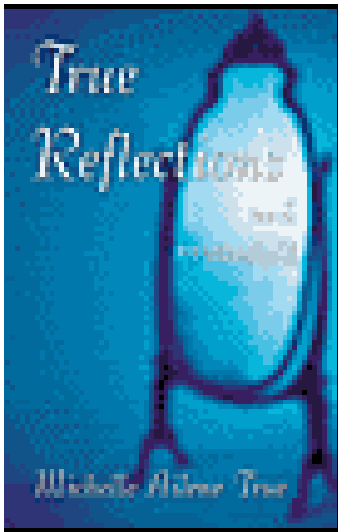
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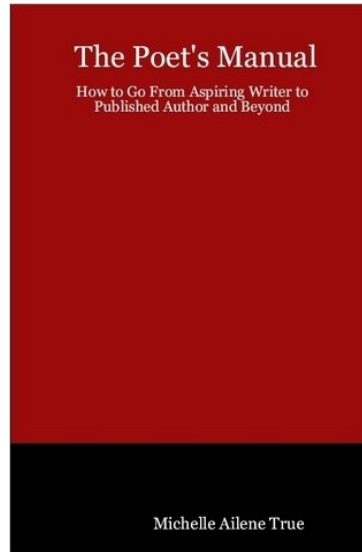
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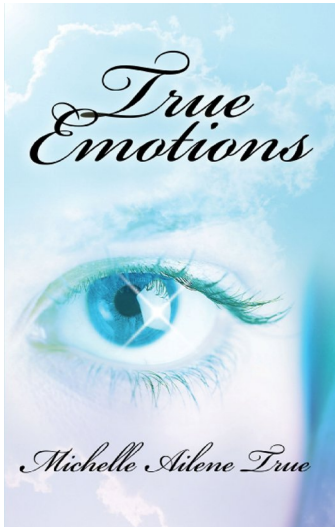
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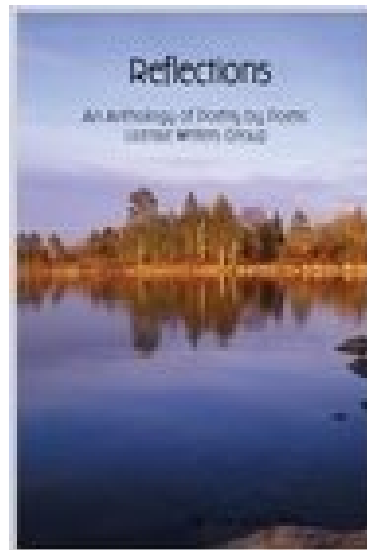
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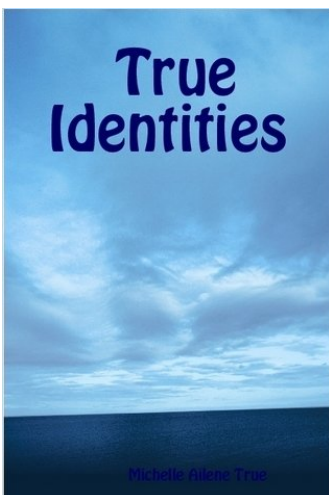
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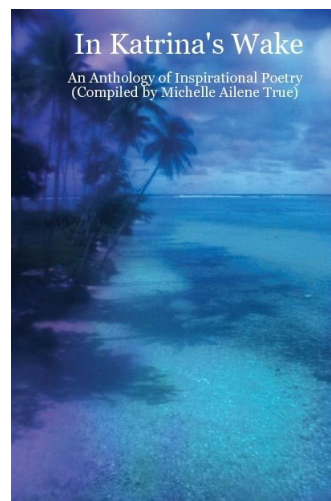
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## Reviews of True Reflections

I'm not an avid reader of poetry. Okay, I never read poetry. But I purchased True Reflections because, well, because I think it's important to support our fellow writers and it's a good way to really get to know them. Right off the bat, beginning with the poem that shares the title of your book, I was pulled in. "True Reflections" the poem impressed me so much that I found myself reading it again and again, delaying my entry into the rest of the collection. I did eventually move on and enjoyed True Reflections as a whole as well. Mostly I was impressed at how you made your life an "open book." You say in one of the poems that you cast your inhibitions aside, and it's obvious that you do. That takes an incredible amount of courage and self-confidence. It's the kind of writing that I find, from a personal perspective, to be the most difficult. Next to "True Reflections" my favorite piece was "Bathtub Voyeur," which displayed, for me, the more whimsical, light-hearted side of you. Being a cat person myself, I could relate to it. True Reflections is a brutal but also beautiful glimpse inside a woman's soul. I look forward to reading the next chapter of your "open book," True Emotions. - Randy Richardson, author of Lost in the Ivy

In a three-book collection of poetry from Michelle Ailene True and Publish America on Truth (I see the interesting double meaning here), this is the first one I read. I, perhaps, have taken them out of order. At 109 pages, this collection is an emotional spring of the author's personal experiences with life and love. It would appear that during this period of the author's writing life, she had some love wounds. Her writing is cathartic for the pain of ending love and situations that no longer are acceptable. Titles such as: Forbidden Fruit, Medal of Honor, Breaking Up, and Fool For Love take you deep into the author's pain. I very much enjoyed the sometimes bittersweet agony through the author's word choices. She wisely employed pacing and rhythm to continue to effects of and increase the power of the words. My favorite poem in this collection was: The Last Wound Is Still Bleeding. Though it's such a basic truth, few stop to admire the simplicity of love. Boiling it down, you have the pain of your break up, you learn from it, you grow through it, and when you find you are ready to love again, you will see that the old wound no longer bleeds. Well done! - Izzy, Fallen Angel Reviews - <http://www.fallenangelreviews.com/April2005/Izzy-TrueReflections.htm>

True Reflections, by Michelle Ailene True, is a collection of sixty-eight poems depicting her life as a woman, mother, and writer. In her own words, Ms. True takes "the profound beauty, truth, and pain in life" and "the poet within reflects them to you". Using a mixture of humor, sadness, and strength she bares her soul for the world to read. Through titles like The Blank Page and Naked Poetry she takes you through the writer's life as she tries to capture the world on paper. In A Medium For Words, she expresses every writers' feelings of being used by the work itself. Moving on to the emotional side of life she opens her heart and talks about divorce and motherhood. Using her words, Ms. True lets you see the elation of a new lover and the excruciating pain of breaking up. After talking about what it is like to be hurt she declares that Alone Isn't Lonely. She shows a strength that is admirable and a will that is determined to remain unbroken. Her sense of empowerment is uplifting and encouraging. Ms. True uses simple words to express her thoughts in her own unique style...there are some gems inside this book that are worth digging for. Overall I thought the poems in this book were well-written and entertaining. For the most part they were rich in imagery. The style is unique and refreshing. The poems about the writing process were very creative and made me smile. Bathtub Voyeur made me laugh out loud. The use of visuals and metaphors was lovely. I thought this book was well worth the read. I enjoyed it thoroughly. I would like to see more from this author. - Somer Robb, KeepitComing.net (author of Things That Go Bump In The Night, The End Of Innocence, and Between Friends)

True Reflections by Michelle Ailene True is a beautifully written book of introspective poetry. I have never been an avid poetry reader, but after reading True Reflections, I may have to give poetry a second look. If all poetry was as eloquent and yet as easy to read as this book is, I would be forced to become a poetry fan. Ms. True has let us into the most intimate recesses of her life. Her poetry speaks to the woman in me. She has penned my thoughts, experiences, and emotions in a way that I wish I could, but from her perspective. True Reflections is a book for women, a book for poets, and a book for people who have had great loves and great disappointments in their lives. Give this insightful collection of poems to all the cherished women in your lives; they will "truly" enjoy it. (Or give one to your ex, he'll understand). It would also make a great gift for any poet. Ms. True makes the layperson understand what it must be like to have a poem burning inside you, begging to be put to paper. I whole-heartedly recommend True Reflections to anyone who loves to read. - Regina Adams, Chariot Rider Reviews

Michelle Ailene True has produced a book of poetry that is truly inspired and touches the hearts of her readers. Her talent for giving meaning and truth to words is immense. It is abundantly apparent that every poem in True Reflections is written

with deep feeling that all of us have felt, but most of us could never express as eloquently as this author has done. This is a book written for all women who have ever experienced love, divorce, and life. There are many poems that, as you read, you feel they were written especially for you. There are poems that make you laugh out loud as you read them, and ones that will make tears come to your eyes. Her poetry is poignant, humorous, and much more. Many emotions are felt through the powerful, to the point, poetry of Ms. True. I would highly recommend this wonderful book to anyone. It would be the perfect gift for any woman who has ever experienced love, marriage, and divorce." - Lola Pierce, author of "Protected By Angels, Chariot Rider Reviews

True Reflections is a collection of poems about various life subjects. The author expresses herself and her feelings about life, love, loss, getting older, world issues, and the craft of writing poetry. All of the author's poems show true raw emotion identifying the poems as a tool of the author to deal with and rid herself of her feelings. A number of the poems have a more universal appeal as well. The title piece True Reflections states that the only boundaries in life are those we create. What Poetry Demands is a piece about writing poetry. This work states that poetry is something uninhibited, raw, and completely open. A Work in Progress is a poem about how one's life journey is never complete but a constant striving. My Life is Now is a piece about letting go of the past and living for today. "True Reflections" contains poems aimed at primarily women, specifically ... women trying to find happiness and personal acceptance after divorce. These women will recognize their frustration and anger... in the author's words while at the same time finding conciliation and hope. Nonetheless, the themes of the poems in "True Reflections" is so varied that almost anyone will find a poem or two that he or she identifies with in some respect. - Tami Brady, Round Table Reviews

Michelle Ailene True is a poet whose voice is unique in that it speaks in volumes with a startling simplicity that few writers seem content to make their own. Through her poetry, True is a woman who speaks freely of her womanhood and of poetry itself, from the birth of her son to the laboring to life of a poem. From the very first page you will see that she prefers to say "extraordinary things using ordinary words." "Taking the profound beauty, truth, and pain in life," True's words become a mirror, revealing secrets strange yet all too familiar to the reader. Just as the title poem implies, you will soon discover that "it is not only me you see in my poems, but true reflections of yourself." - Ina Goodling, author of "Emoceans"

Michelle Ailene True is a 'true' poet. Her honest passion flourishes on her pages and speaks to all who will listen. True's writings range from simplistic and easy to the most complex of thoughts. 'True Reflections' is a wonderful book of poetry that captures the most painful, private thoughts of True, and can be assimilated easily into a form in which we all can relate. Her poem 'When Your Country Goes to War' captures beautifully the depth and pain of all that we question, and 'Hurricane' is a piece that everyone, no matter the gender, can easily relate. This is truly a wonderful read and would be a great addition to anyone's collection of great literary art. - Kathy Nesselroad, author of "67 Pieces of My Heart"

True Reflections by Michelle True is an exploration of the writer's journey through a failed relationship, during various stages of the healing process. True focuses on her growth and development as a person, and it seems that her writing has been a primary vehicle for this process. The poems are conversational and introspective, and accessible particularly to those people who are themselves dealing with loss. What I enjoyed most were those times when she diverted from her main themes of love and writing, in such poems as "Bathtub Voyeur," or "Chocoholic." - Tara McGovern, [www.bookzonepro.com](http://www.bookzonepro.com)

Reading through Michelle Ailene True's True Reflections one gets to see different colors of life. Every single poem is carved right out of what she feels and sees. It's very honest and pure and is the essence of our very lives. Poems to look out for: "Fool for Love" (Reminds me of an Elvis Presley song), "On the Radio," "Alone isn't Lonely," "Words Like Leaves," and "It's Raining". I wish Michelle the very best and would encourage you all to check it out. - Gautam Dhar, author of "The Old Man Said"

I especially liked "Birth of a Poem". It was interesting to see you make the connection between writing poetry and giving birth. As poets, we don't just come up with the topics to write about. We mainly draw from our life experiences or the things we observe. Your book is a must-read. - Stinger Bee 1T, author of "Ambrosia's Intimate Sanctuary: Light to Dark"

## Reviews of True Emotions

Once again, I was quickly sucked into this collection of poetry. Insightful, sometimes humorous, but always very accurate and truthful are several descriptions I would associate with Michelle Ailene True. For any true poetry lover, we know and appreciate an artist who can succinctly choose words that give vivid imagery, entice emotions, and do so in few words. No Retreat and I Won't Give Up are examples of the author's inner strength but also they show us that the victimization come not from how the other people/situation treats us, but how we respond to the situation. Our choices make us either the victim or the survivor. Look Back And Laugh makes you proud of her wisdom. It goes on like that though all 151 pages as the author tries to convince herself, and the process convinces you, the reader, of a fantastic universal truth. We all hurt. We all bleed. We all want love. And most importantly, we all have the strength within to rise above and move on. Though the poems are the author's pain, when you read them, there is not one person who cannot associate with the words, the emotions, the pain or the joy expressed in the poems. They are universal and beautifully crafted for that very reason. - Reviewed by: Izzy <http://www.fallenangelreviews.com/April2005/Izzy-TrueEmotions.htm>

Once again, Michelle Ailene True has captured life in prose. She has a talent for putting countless feelings in very few words. Her poems are diverse, covering every subject you can imagine and some you would never think of. Broken relationships, love, writing poetry, family, and even watching porn are subjects Ms. True uses to write her delightfully clever and emotion packed poetry. Her insightful wisdom about life and its mysteries is displayed throughout her poetry. As with True Reflections, Michelle Ailene True has produced another beautifully written poetry book in True Emotions that comes highly recommended. I have never been a huge poetry fan, but Ms. True has changed my mind about poetry. I own a copy of True Reflections and will be sure to purchase True Emotions as soon as it becomes available. I highly recommend True Emotions to everyone. We give it our highest rating of five stars. - Lola Pierce, Chariot Rider Reviews <http://www.thechariotriders.bravehost.com>

Michelle Ailene True opens her second delightfully written poetry book with the quote: "Poetry expresses the soul's interpretation of the human experience". While reading True Emotions, I felt like I had my very own small window into the soul of this gifted poet. As an invited voyeur, I saw glimpses of how Ms. True views the world and her experiences within it. Ms. True has shown through the powerful imagery of her poems that she has been through it all, but remains a strong, optimistic woman. True Emotions is perfect companion book to True's first poetry book, True Reflections. I highly recommend this superbly written book of soulful (and occasionally hilarious) poetry, and can only hope we may see yet another truly insightful collection of work from Michelle Ailene True. - Regina Adams, Chariot Rider Reviews

True Emotions by Michelle Ailene True is a wonderfully entertaining read. This collection is a wonderful glimpse into the life and heart of the author. Each poem takes a small piece of her soul and lays it open for the world. Ms. True proves she has strength beyond measure but still shows the vulnerability of the woman she hides inside the bravado. In poems such as A Poetry Reading and The Poet Deep Within, Ms. True shares the fears of an author unveiling her work for the world. In Death Of A Marriage she takes us into the heartbreak and relief of the ending of a bad marriage. Showing her strength she writes such poems as No Retreat and I Won't Give Up. In the wonderfully sweet Grandma Pretzel, Ms. True tells us of a woman she knew as a child and still thinks of. Ms. True uses her own brutally and sometimes shockingly honest style to carve her own niche in this genre. I felt my heart break at her words and laughed out loud at others. The strength of the author comes through in her work. Ms. True's words are simple and easy to read. Watching Porn was extremely shocking. At first I wasn't sure what to think of it. It is defiantly not conventional, but Ms. True tries very hard to be unconventional. I applaud her for tackling such a taboo topic. After the initial shock I laughed out loud at my reaction. Reactions, good or bad, are what writers strive for and she defiantly gets that one with this poem. True Emotions is refreshingly simple and humorous. Overall it is a great book, even better than the first. I would defiantly recommend it to all poetry lovers. Ms. True has a unique style and wonderful gift with words. I look forward to reading the next installment in her series. - Somer Robb, [keepitcoming.net](http://keepitcoming.net)

True Emotions, written by author Michelle Ailene True, covers all emotions and subjects of life. Not one the same, some intriguing, some very different; but all written very well. Michelle Ailene True, author of True Reflections, brings to you True Emotions with one hundred poems to satisfy any poetry lover. Keep your eyes peeled for future works by Michelle Ailene True. - Veronica Lamont, author of I'm Not Mad, I'm Special

Upon reading, True Emotions, my heart was touched. Michelle's poetry carries the reader into its depths of passion. She displays rich words, which awaken the senses. I have found her book, "True Emotions," to be a pleasure of creative poetry. Michelle writes from the heart with such meaningful thoughts and insight. It was an honor to have read this book. -Cynthia Memmolo. author of Water Bearer Rhymes

True Emotions is a book that will reach inside you in so many ways. Michelle gives something of herself in each verse, as she relates her lost love, ever continuing love for her son and even on how she feels about success. You are given an insight into deep emotions that flow out into her words so smoothly that we almost become a part of her world. One of the poems in this book, "Pieces Of The Puzzle", may be deceiving, but you soon realize that the poet is referring to her life as well as her fabulous poetry. What more can you ask from a poet than that she give you a piece of herself? This is a beautiful book, deeply felt and sincerely written, that I recommend to anyone who loves poetry. - Robbie Britt, author of Dead Men Don't Deal

True Emotions by Michelle Ailene True delivers an entertaining account and perspective of love, life, relationship and loss. The poems in this book truly come from the heart, and make the absolutely remarkable True Emotions come to life. Each poem is woven together with various emotions and transitions so subtle that the reader will be drawn into the depths of Ms. True's inner most feelings. For example, in I'M JUST ME, Ms. True writes: "I'm just me, no more, no less; I don't leave much for you to guess. In SHATTERED, My heart has been frequently shattered, as though it hasn't ever mattered." Showing such strengths, candor, and vulnerability each emotion transcends throughout her writings. True Emotions will leave a lasting impression upon its readers as they reflect upon its veritable journey of emotions. I highly recommend this book to everyone. David A. Lewis, author of Forever Moments

Michelle True is a poet with strong self-respect, who makes her own choices in life and deals with the consequences. In her newly published work, True Emotions, Michelle discusses old and new relationships, the sensuous pleasures of everyday life and loves in a self-contained and thoughtful way. Each word is placed with care on the page with spiritual power and often joy, as she serenely blends emotions with descriptive sounds and original expressions. Michelle sometimes writes with a subtle feeling of disappointment in life, reminiscent of Emily Dickinson's self-contained solitude, that carries you throughout her writing and reveals a quiet passion and love of people and life combined with expectation of something better. Her poems have a calming effect on the soul, of acceptance of life as it is, yet striving for more, as she ties together beginnings and endings often surprising the reader at the finish. The sorrows, hurts, acceptance and release of the act of divorce is poignantly described throughout the book, leaving the reader with a deep compassion for the wounded self felt by the author as a sweet dream turned sour. True Emotions drains the dross in all of us to reveal the nugget of gold Michelle True leaves at the bottom of our souls. It is a book everyone who loves poetry's simplest, truest reflection of life as it is and how we wish it could be, will want to read and place among their finest works of poetry, as well as share with others. - Joyce Ann Edmondson, author of "The Listening Tree"

She's done it again! Michelle Ailene True, author of True Reflections, invites us on another intimate journey with her phenomenal second book, True Emotions. Only a poetess of True's unfathomable capacity could deliver a collection as thought-provoking as this one, and Michelle is a woman who is 'True' to her words. Where True Reflections left off, True Emotions takes us deep below the surface, giving voice to the unspeakable and courage to the potential poet in each of us. With startling insight and eloquence, True weaves a seductive web into which the reader will find himself irresistibly drawn. From the introductory title poem to the very last page, True shows us all that "In order to be true to ourselves, we must recognize and embrace our true emotions. - Ina Goodling, author of Emoceans

Michelle Ailene True has written a menagerie of masterpieces in this breath-taking look into the heart and mind. Love, desire, discontent, self-pride, family and much more are described with such talent of expression. Whether it be in rhyme or just in everyday language, the reason is evident in each word. Provocative, happy, sad, or even playful, Michelle brings each piece off the page and into your heart. Sharing so much of herself, that it is hard at times to separate her feelings and experiences from your own. Michelle pours so much of her soul into these writings that you may forget, like I did, that she is an author and instead a friend or even a voice from within your own heart. It is easy to identify with her inner and most personal thoughts as she reveals the most honest portions of her life. With each writing I found myself eager to move on to the next. Exciting, fascinating, moving, and just an excellent book. I love poetry, and Michelle's brand of writing is both unique and powerful. I can't wait for her next work of poetic perfection. - J.W.Bradford, author of Voices of the Heart

Michelle Ailene True's book "True Emotions" is a must read for every poetry lover. You will find "True Emotions" to be a great addition to your own private library of poetry. When you read "Prisoner," it will connect you to the helpless side of your own emotions and then bring you back out of helplessness that we all have felt and overcome. While reading her poem "The Least Common Denominator," you'll recognize the lessons all of us humans strive to learn and accomplish. It really is a must read for any reader that likes to crawl up with something hot to drink on a cold winter night and lose themselves in their True Emotions and reflect upon them! - Bonnie Florea, author of Shades of Gray

Join this single mother's journey as she breaks into independence - at first seemingly trying to convince herself of her strength, and then realizing it. Michelle makes moving and powerful statements such as: "We have more power than we may know, but it is useless unless we make the right choices". Her poetic voice brings the reader to realize that we are more victims of ourselves than of circumstances. I flew with Michelle on the wings of eagles and can now view the world with less pessimism. - Dave & Lillian Brummet, authors of: Trash Talk - An Inspirational Guide to Saving Time and Money through Better Waste and Resource Management.

Michelle Ailene True's True Emotions is filled with poetry that depicts perfectly how poets feel about their craft and the words that they use to draw a picture for the reader. "Hair Obsession" shows her self-assuredness, "No Retreat" and "Don't Give Up" shows her strength as a person while "I Didn't Mean To Leave" illustrates deep sadness through loss, and her poem "Without You" shows the full cycle of love, loss and the return to wholeness. Michelle has a unique way of pulling you into her mind and heart as a poet and shows you the love and frustration of her craft. It's funny, loving and serious throughout and a must for book lovers everywhere! - Terri Ann Armstrong, Author of My Soul Has Spoken.

## Reviews of True Identities

I have just finished reading Michelle Ailene True's True Identities and enjoyed it very much. Michelle's poetry is so real and touches on so many aspects of life. It gives one pause to think about many things in our own lives. I feel as though I have become acquainted with Michelle through her poetry. I look forward to reading her other books. - LaVonne Boudouris, author of Celebrations

Reading through these poems I am stopped by my own reflections captured - relating, smiling, longing, dreaming, repulsed yet reminded that it is our responsibility to bring these emotions to life. True Identities does just this. In life everything and everyone is given labels and we live our life's with these labels believing them to be our own. It is only when we decide to live our life's without labels that our true identity find us. Thank you Michelle for reminded me what really is real. I applaud you on your strength, your wit and humor but above all your sensitivities to what is happening in and around you. - Rhona Pienaar, author of The Echoes of a Whisper

True Identities absolutely touched my heart. With reading each poem, I could imagine those feelings myself pouring out of my own soul. Indeed one of the most remarkable written poetry books I've read, the deepness and intensity of feelings can be felt from pen to paper to reader. Everyone who faces deep emotions should read this book. It is truly one of those you'd want to read over and over. - Amy Witkowski, author of Unwritten Life and Contrary Measures

Michelle True's newest book of poetry again reflects the transparency of her gentle and reflective, yet down to the wire substance, of her thoughts and feelings. Each poem has both an earthly and spiritual quality that lets the reader know she is human, yet aspires to a greater expression of her humanity. Her poetry is earthy at times--after all she is a Jew--and has the Jewish concept of the earth, and all that is in it, as being good, not evil. The body is a gift, and Michelle appreciates its functions and clearly respects what the body can feel or do at times, protecting it from harm at others. Michelle's poems on her faith reveal her love for God and her expression of it in worship through her Jewish customs, practice and holidays. She also reveals through her poetry a person who can live alone and still be in touch with the emotions and reality of life experiences. She can be a mother with a mother's thoughts, while at the same time enter into the world of skaters or lovers and bring their beauty home to us through her words. One of my favorite poems ends with these lines: "The world is filled with silence, each moment pure and true, it's a special celebration for time stops when I'm with you." It's a celebration of the spirit to read Michelle's latest compilation and enjoy her view of the world she and others live in. - Joyce Ann Edmondson, author of The Listening Tree

"True Identities" is just what it says. By reading this book I feel that I got a good sense of who Michelle True really is. By statements from her own poems, she's a strong willed woman who prides herself in being a dedicated mother and Jew. In "True Identities", you'll find the feeling of loneliness that most mothers feel when their child is away; and the emptiness that one can feel when they're without a significant other. "True Identities" was a wonderful read, that I'm sure will capture all its readers - one way or another. - A. L. Harris, author of My Mentality

Michelle writes with such honesty and plunges into reality. True Identities is an amazing read! No one piece could be deemed a favorite. Michelle touches on life and how it is seen by some and embraced by many. I would highly recommend True Identities to any poetry lover! Great job, Michelle! - April Lynne, Author of Dreams Of Eternity & On The Banks Of Mitchell's Creek

A book filled with everyday reality. Each poem will take you to another venue of Michelle's existence, exploring the emotions of each topic, in each poem, to their depth. She tells it like it is, no fluff here - no chance of misunderstanding, no wondering what, exactly, she meant! A 'breath of fresh air' on today's poetic landscape. NOT being Jewish, I LOVED the insight these poems provided. There is absolutely something here for everyone. - Evvy Garrett, author of Odium Bar & Cafe and Other City Poems

True Identities is a collection of poetry taking us to a deep part of life. Michelle's thoughts about life, especially her poetry about Jews and the Holocaust was riveting. Michelle speaks easily in her words, never giving her readers a second thought as to what she is expressing. A true and thoughtful book. A welcome addition to any poetry library. - Robin Gorley, author of A lifetime of Words.

True Identities is so inspiring and beautiful; it is a must read for everyone. Michelle Ailene True is very talented and her poems make you think about your life and who you are and what others expect you to be. From reading her poetry I find she has found her identity and is happy with her life. I started reading her book and could not stop reading then I realized I was out of pages. It is a wonderful book Michelle is a artist when it comes to the beauty of her poetry. - Sandra McFarland, author of Material Things Don't Matter

I read this book of poems and I was amazed at the reality and the truth behind each and every one of them. True Identities is a compilation of poems about everyday life and existence. I was spellbound by each one, and was very disappointed when the book ended. It was just too short for me. I wanted the book to continue forever. All the poems are excellent, but my favorite ones were Rumors, Empty Canvases, Paper Plates, A Risk Worth Taking, Erotica, Ironies, Do You Listen, In Retrospect, He Thinks I Need Him, Publication, What Was It That Attracted Me, Being Happy Is The Best Revenge, Intimidated, Sleeping With You, Writer's Block and Little White Lies. The ones listed I could relate to these more because they were so nested into the harvest of my existence. Erotica described a hot sensation of feelings, and Publication was just perfect in every way to the road of publication. Ms. True is a gifted and enjoyable writer, and I can't wait to read more of her books. Her poems are just beautiful and inspiring and they brought tears to my eyes in a joyous way. Ms. True will be around for a long time. She's working on her 3rd and 4th books, and I'm desperate and very eager to read her words of truth, understanding and love. - Carol Ann Culbert Johnson

True's poetry rings true. Without any manipulation or fluff, her poetry just tells it like it is. She's a real, a true, poetess. -- Jolyn Wells-Moran, PhD, author of Consuela Confesses, four non-fiction books and editor of The Midlife News

Michelle Ailene True's new book, "True Identities" captures the passing moments of the author's life in poignant verse. I surprised myself by laughing out loud at the unexpected humor and dry wit found in lines like the ending to the beautifully romantic poem "Rough Hands" (Touch me, Hold me, Caress me, As long as you wash them first, I love your rough hands.) And this shockingly hilarious image from "Empty Wrappers" (I laugh hysterically at the sudden image of a man shoving a tampon up between his legs.) You may also find yourself in need of a Kleenex or two when reading her insightful look at some of the injustice of the world. While reading this wonderful book, I found myself surrounded by memories. Memories of endless summer days, childhood, family picnics, the first breathless passion of a new love and the sweet joys of motherhood. I felt her pain when writing of love grown cold. Her anger at lost jobs and incompetent employers. I cheered her on as she expressed her power as a woman and deep pride in her heritage. Yes, you will find Michelle Ailene True in the pages of this book, as she states in one of her poems. But look closer and you may also find pieces of yourself. I will leave you with a line from her beautiful, thoughtful poem "In The Sea" (Will this beautiful, wet, blue world be destroyed by man's ability and apparent willingness to do so.) - Elizabeth Melton Parsons, Published Author, Reviewer, Poetry Editor

It has been the privilege of Chariot Rider Reviews to review two previous poetry books penned by Michelle Ailene True. True Reflections and True Emotions precede True Identities in what we feel is a magnificent, moving tribute to life through poetry. True Identities flows with the same splendid and sometimes astonishing truth of life found in the two previous books by Michelle Ailene True. Truth, humor, sadness, and countless other emotions are found within the pages of True Identities. Reading her poems, you cannot stop feeling as though Ms. True not only relates, but also has possibly walked with you through many parts of your own life. Her words capture feelings in beautiful poems that will stir your heart. Chariot Rider Reviews gave True Reflections and True Emotions our highest ranking of five stars. We find that True Identities continues with the same caliber of excellence as the other books in the True series. We also rate it our highest rating of five stars. We highly recommend True Identities to anyone who appreciates great writing. - Lola Pierce, Chariot Rider Reviews

Michelle True's use of words will have you visualizing yourself in today's jungle, using prehistoric skills to survive. The fear, pain, danger, beauty, love and grace of life; they are all here. Insightful statements like, "All battles fought, are in the mind" could hardly be truer. I personally related to her struggles to listen to and enjoy life while resolving to make a difference in every moment in every day. This book is filled with entertaining and mind-stretching poetry! ~ Dave & Lillian Brummet, co-authors of the book Trash Talk - a guide for anyone concerned about his or her impact on the environment.

True Identities by author Michelle True is a superbly written book which is entertaining to read. It left footprints on my heart as it covers all the subjects quite remarkably and leaves with any poetry lover to quench his thirst quite easily. She is indeed a very creative and talented poetess who possesses great talent and writes with zeal, passion and insight. As I read

this book I could very well evaluate how she has experienced the world and is still very strong enough to reveal those experiences through her powerful imagery using poetry as a powerful tool of expression. Her writing style is very unique and impressive as it can touch and play the strings of one's heart like a harp as it did mine and brought tears to my eyes after I finished reading the book. It deserves a ranking of highest rate and I would recommend this book to all poetry lovers. - Samia Muqueem, author of *Visions of the Soul*

Michelle Ailene True's "True Identities" is another home run! She accomplishes her obvious goals of portraying what it takes to be a writer with frustrations and joys alike, a mother, a woman of divorce, someone who's proud she's of Jewish decent and even when she knew it was time to trade in that old jalopy. But no poem hit home as did "Chosen," where she clearly showed that no matter where you're from, what you believe or what religion you are, we are all of the same race, human. True Identities would make a great gift and is a must for all poetry lovers! Bravo Michelle! - Terri Ann Armstrong, Author of *My Soul Has Spoken*.

A great author of poetry, Michelle Ailene True is truly gifted. Every poem she has written in this book has touched my heart. The author expresses her feelings in her own unique way. I highly recommend this book, True Identities by Michelle Ailene True, to all poets and poetry readers. - Tessie L. Chapman, author of 'The Enchanted Island' and 'Guardians of the Enchanted Island'

True Identities is a wonderful book of poetry that brings to us the heart and soul of its author, Michelle True. She has a great understanding of life, people and their hopes and tragedies. This talented poetess reaches out to the psyche within us all, helping one to find an answer even within a question, and to see within our tears, a bit of humor that lifts us on and upward to self inspiration. This is the only book of poetry that I have read that leaves nothing to chance. Within her talented words is something for everyone. I highly recommend this work, which shows a master's touch in the art of poetry. - Kathy Bunn-Schultz, author of *Convent and the Rose*.

True Identities by Michelle Ailene True signifies our identities line by line. The pages are rich with real emotions, memories, and history that serves as a blueprint for any person's life. Enjoyable reads for me were *The Poetry Flu* and *A Risk Worth Taking*. I was touched by *Being a Jew*, *Chosen*, and *Listen to Your Voice*. After reading her book I came away with a reservoir of writings such as *Colors of Love*, *Truth Unveiled*, and *Breathless* that are ingrained in my mind. Michelle is on to something and this is a must read. ~ Pier Marie Tyler, Author of *Abstract*

True Identities by Michelle Ailene True is a gem! This collection of poetry provides thoughtful insight on relationship issues, sexuality, writing, religious beliefs, and more. Readers will identify with Ms. True's own-to-earth writing style and her candor as she describes her personal life experiences. I highly recommend this book. - Debra A. Warren, author of *Pausing to Catch my Breath*

True Identities is one of the best books of poetry I have ever read. Thought provoking and touching, the poems in this book not only made me feel alive and aware but also made me reflect on my life. A must read book that gives its readers love, compassion, warmth and understanding. - Penny Clark Babson, author of "*By The Grace of God: An adult Child's Journey Through Cancer Loss and After-Life Connections*" and "*The Last Trip Home*"

True Identities is Ms. True's best work yet. Her collection takes the reader through the entire range of emotions and makes them look deeper into themselves. The broad subject matter keeps the reader interested. Laying herself open once more, Ms. True takes us on a journey through her heart and mind. The personal nature of some of these pieces makes the reader feel like they are her best friends. Sharing her thoughts on love, motherhood, religion, divorce, and every day life, the author boldly bares her soul in her own unique fashion. The poems *Game Over*, *Intimidation*, *Being Happy is the Best Revenge*, and *No Room For A Man* shows the author's strength and sense of empowerment. Meanwhile the poem *In The Dark* depicts the more vulnerable side of Ms. True. *Silent Echoes* and *Too Far Apart* conveys the pain of a dying relationship while *Time Stops When I'm With You*, and *Breathless* speak of the joys of being in love. In the works *Chosen*, *Nine Candles for Hanukah*, *Hanukah Greetings*, *We Are Jews*, *The Holiest Day*, and *Holocaust*, the author shares her faith. Telling of the trials and heartaches of being Jewish but also of the wonder and celebration of her religion. I felt my heart break when she spoke of racism and destruction. A warm glow filled my heart when she told of the unity and desire for peace. Still other pieces talk about motherhood, being a woman, writing, and the hopes and dreams of Ms. True. Though a few of the poems were weak and some hard to follow most were inspired pieces of art. Ms. True embraces her audience and holds nothing back. With beautiful rhythm and imagery, emotion and attitude, this book is nothing short of fantastic. Ms. True's use of simple words and interesting metaphors sets her apart from all others. - Overall, I really

enjoyed this collection. Ms. True did a wonderful job of taking her audience through the ups and downs of her life. You walk away from this book feeling like you just had a long chat with your best friend. This is a must read for any poetry lover! - Somer Robb, Author of *Between Friends*, *The End Of Innocence*, and *Things That Go Bump In The Night*

*True Identities* is Michelle's best work yet. Her introspective voice speaks loud and clear to the reader and provides a clear, crisp view of her feelings. There is no mistaking her words. One of my favorites is "Do You Listen?" Its beautiful prose awakens the robotic minds of those that move through life systematically and beckons them to 'listen' to their world and take heed of its calling. "Love Blooms" is fluid and descriptive – a beautiful confession of feelings as love blooms, then dies. I have far too many favorites to list. *True Identities* is a must read for any poetry fan and is highly recommended from this author. - Kathy Nesselroad, author of *67 Pieces of My Heart* and *Renderings*

A sampler of ten poems from each of my poetry books

TRUE REFLECTIONS

Ages

I am all the ages  
I ever was  
and will ever be.

I exist now,  
in the past and  
in the future.

If age is a  
state of mind,  
then I am  
young, old  
and infinite.

Cleaning My Emotional House

In cleaning my emotional house  
I sort out the good from the bad,  
the love from the hate,  
the exciting from the boring,  
the dirty from the clean.

While throwing out my  
bad memories of you,  
I resolve to hold onto  
the good ones.

After all, I have to believe  
you had some redeeming qualities  
or I wouldn't have fallen in love  
with you.

I will keep the best part of you -  
my early memories of us together -  
not that I need them,  
but because I deserve them.

Destiny

Never under-  
estimate  
the hand you have  
in your own fate.

Many things are  
preordained  
but others can  
be rearranged.

All your life  
you will be faced  
with opportunities  
you can't waste.

Your future will  
often depend  
on how you choose,  
so in the end,

take your time  
when you decide;  
from some mistakes  
you cannot hide.

It's in your hands  
more than you know;  
destiny is yours  
to control.

Fool For Love

I've always been a fool for love  
and it a fool for me.  
Sometimes it's led me places  
that I wasn't meant to be.

Love comes disguised in many forms  
and sometimes not at all.  
It takes me to the greatest heights,  
only to let me fall.

It hides in secret places  
where I'm less inclined to look;  
so many years of searching,  
what a toll on me it took.

There are times that I've been in love  
but the love was not returned.  
To be more cautious with my heart  
is a lesson I have learned.

When love has turned the tables  
and I'm loved but don't love back,  
it's hard to put my finger on  
just what it is they lack.

Although I am quite headstrong,  
my heart will always rule.  
No matter all the heartache,  
I'll always be love's fool.

## Forbidden Fruit

I am the forbidden fruit  
that tantalizes and teases.

I am the bright color  
that attracts your attention.

I am the sweet smell  
that draws you closer.

I am the peel you remove  
to expose the flesh.

I am the juicy nectar  
flowing down your cheeks.

Yours is the seed  
about to fill my core.

I am Eve to your Adam,  
offering my forbidden fruit.

## Layers

You think you know me,  
but there are so many  
subtle layers,  
like the hundreds of  
levels of consciousness  
we supposedly go through when  
we are under anesthesia  
or what happens to our souls  
when our bodies die.

I let you see  
what I want you to see  
and if your reaction is  
what I want,  
then I peel back  
another layer.

I take care to reveal myself  
to you slowly, like the  
unfolding petals of a rose,  
protecting the  
delicate blossom within.

I will never be naked,  
completely exposed to you,  
but as time passes  
and you earn my trust  
I will continue to  
reveal myself to you,  
a tantalizing striptease  
of my heart, mind and soul

in all their glorious,  
precious layers.

## Liar

You adamantly state  
that you never lie to me.

Some believe that you can  
tell a liar because  
they can't look you in the eye,  
they look down to the left,  
their speech falters,  
they cross their arms and/or legs,  
their eyes narrow,  
they touch their face with their hands,  
and they talk too fast.

With you, though, it  
was much easier to tell.

Through experience I have  
perfected the method for  
recognizing the moments  
that you are lying to me.

It's when your lips move.

## My Life Is Now

I've finally gotten, don't ask how,  
to where my life is here and now.  
What used to be and is no more  
is locked away behind a door.

Once contributions have been made  
they dissolve to shadows and shade.  
We can't keep clinging to the past;  
it must be left behind at last.

The future then is free to come,  
past indiscretions all undone.  
We cannot look too far ahead,  
the future hangs by little thread.

We can only live each day  
to the fullest extent in every way.  
Embrace it, then gently let it go;  
so many more to have and hold.

Acknowledging where we have been  
then moving on is how we win.  
If we hold on too strong and tight,  
we won't move on to what is right.

What matters most is why and how

and what and where my life is now.

### The Last Word

In all our conversations  
you must have the last word;  
you force your views on others  
and their voices don't get heard.

You have lost all perception  
of life beyond your own;  
anyone in a relationship  
with you feels all alone.

I'm tired of being the only  
person here willing to try;  
it's my turn for the last word,  
so here it is – "Goodbye!"

### The Poem has Arrived

With little fanfare  
and no warning  
the poem begins  
with an idea  
and grows quickly,  
one word or phrase  
at a time,  
unforced;

moving from  
one thought to another  
with ease,  
logic and  
purpose  
until finally  
it is complete;

after an exhilarating,  
sometimes exhausting  
journey from  
an inspired beginning  
to an  
enlightened conclusion;  
the poem has arrived.

### **TRUE EMOTIONS**

#### Call Me

Call me just to talk,  
to ask me what's new.  
The topic doesn't matter,  
as long as I hear from you.

It's hard to connect

at all during the day.  
Emails have to suffice  
for what we have to say.

I prefer the sound of a voice;  
its volume, tone and style  
can cause me to chuckle,  
to cry, laugh or smile.

While email is convenient,  
and it helps us survive  
I'd prefer you on the phone  
or better yet, in person, live.

### Don't Waste My Time

Don't waste my time  
it's too precious to me.  
If you've something to say  
spit it out already.

Days are long, nights are short;  
so many hours to be killed.  
Not a single minute  
should be mindlessly filled.

If it has no true purpose  
get it out of my way.  
Only the best of intentions  
will find me today.

Life's far too short  
for things inconsequential,  
so I fill it with people  
and things that are special.

Time passes without  
complete truths being told.  
Time means everything  
whether we're young or old.

I always make the best use  
of my scarce, precious time.  
always quite aware  
that it's not really mine.

### I Didn't Mean to Leave

I didn't mean to leave so abruptly;  
it took me by surprise, too.

I'm sorry that you are left  
having to deal with the shock,  
pain and sorrow.

I wish I could be there for you.

This was not my choice;  
this is something I can't fix.

It may be small comfort  
to know that I'm still here;  
that everything you loved  
about me is still here;

that I'm able to see, hear  
and watch over you all,  
as I did before, although  
from a different perspective;

that although I won't be there  
in person to share the tears,  
the fears and the laughter  
I know you will find again one day,  
you can always reach out to me  
in your heart, mind and spirit;

that I will always hear you  
even if I can't respond;

that one day we'll be reunited;

you must hold onto that belief,  
go on with your life, your future,  
knowing that I'm here beside you.

I haven't stopped loving you;  
I'll never stop loving you  
and perhaps I'll be able to  
break the barrier that now separates us  
and find some way to show you.

One day when you are able to see  
through eyes drained of tears,  
you will feel me in your heart  
and know I'll never leave that  
warm, loving place within you.

Until we meet again, forever,  
I will always be yours.

### Our Affair

I meet you in the strangest places,  
hiding from familiar faces.  
Is our purpose love or lust?  
All we know is meet we must.

No phone calls or flower-filled vases;  
we must make sure to leave no traces.  
Into each other's arms we fall;  
Around our time we build a wall

Where nothing, no one else exists;  
except us and our frantic trysts.  
Hurried kisses, clothes come off;  
sometimes we're gentle, others rough.

Our rendezvous is short and sweet;  
we often cannot wait to meet.  
We don't know how long we'll last;  
We have no future, we had no past.

In the here and now we live;  
taking what each has to give.  
One day our passion will burn out;  
of that we both have little doubt.

Until that sorry day should come,  
to our passion we must succumb.  
Each time we part we must disguise  
the sweet exhaustion in our eyes.

As long as we can get away,  
our hot affair is here to stay.  
We fool ourselves and both our spouses,  
heading for our separate houses.

### Permanent Ink

I pencil in the names  
of my dates;  
in the event someone  
better comes along,  
they can be easily erased.

How I long to meet a man  
worthy of erasable or,  
better yet,  
permanent ink.

Until then, I keep my  
pencil sharp and  
an eraser handy.

### Shallow Lives

Some people live such  
shallow lives;  
following the crowd,  
doing what is expected,  
trying to keep up  
with the Joneses.

They don't take risks,  
speak their minds,  
stand up for themselves  
or follow their dreams.

Rather than settle  
for the shallows,  
I take a deep breath and  
jump into the deep end  
of life's ocean.

Better that than  
picking sand out of my butt  
from sitting on the safe beach or  
only getting wet up to my knees  
wading in the predictable shallows.

### The Cuts and Scrapes of Childhood

The cuts and scrapes of childhood  
earned on the playground floor  
are too numerous to keep track of,  
not to mention all the gore.

Skinned knees, fingers and elbows,  
scraped arms, legs and faces  
from playground equipment and  
so-called harmless games and chases.

Neosporin, soap and Tylenol  
help almost every ache,  
but mom's warm hugs and kisses  
are the icing on the cake.

So when you have an injury,  
come here and let me see.  
You'll be back on the playground  
as quickly as can be!

### The Poetry Comes

Again it comes quietly  
to stand beside me,  
gently whispering in my ear,  
"Write it down...  
take dictation...  
don't miss a word."

I am my poetry's secretary,  
pen and paper always handy  
to capture all the words  
my brain dictates.

Then I must transcribe  
my scribbled notes,  
making sense of it;  
writing until the  
flow of words diminishes  
and the ink has run dry.

If I stop I might miss a  
a key element,  
leave an empty space  
in the poem  
that can never be filled.

No matter how many times  
I may try to fill in any blanks later on,  
if I don't get it all the first time  
whole sections may be lost.

It's all or nothing,  
inspiration or  
desperation,  
each time  
the poetry comes.

### Unknowing

We see in each other what we want to see;  
the truth is hidden too easily.  
It's easy to love until the first fight;  
when the unknowing begins to bite.

We refuse to see all that we must;  
we live in delusions thought fair and just.  
pretending we have something good  
while settling, which we swore we never would.

Afraid to ask for what we need,  
our hungering soul is unable to feed.  
Sacrificing who we are;  
how did we let it get this far?

Living precariously from lie to lie;  
too hopeless to dream, never daring to try.  
Not taking a chance, never changing or growing;  
sentenced till death do us part, unknowing.

### Wounds

Raw and fresh,  
the pain is acute.

Over time it lessens  
yet never stops;  
the scars fade  
yet never vanish completely

All it takes is a look,  
an action or a word  
to re-open old wounds;  
a well-chosen phrase  
that twists the knives  
permanently stuck  
in the hearts.

Over time we became experts  
at hiding our wounds  
from each other;  
wounds that no bandages,  
surgery, or medicine can heal.

Apology and forgiveness  
are the only miracle cures yet  
ego and stubborn pride  
won't allow us to perform  
these simple acts.

So we go on  
hurting each other,  
picking at scabs,  
making old wounds bleed anew.

When our blood merges,  
coagulating on the floor  
we step over and around it,  
pretending it doesn't exist.

There's nothing wrong;  
we feel no pain;  
we have no wounds.

## **TRUE IDENTITIES**

### **Breathless**

I'm breathless near you;  
I inhale your scent  
and my senses tingle  
uncontrollably.

Being near you makes  
every hair on my body  
stand up on end,  
electrified with  
anticipation.

One touch from you  
and my center  
moistens;  
my body responds  
with a will of its own.

When our eyes lock  
my soul has met its match;  
there is no need for word,  
sound, or touch.

I forget to breathe,  
so lost in you  
that I gasp,

taking a long,  
deep breath,  
then carefully hold  
it again so as  
not to break your spell  
that leaves me  
breathless.

### **Do You Listen?**

Do you listen to the wind  
when it whispers?  
Do you listen to your heart  
when it pounds?  
Do you listen to your tears  
when they're falling?  
Do you listen to all of  
life's precious sounds?

Do you listen to your mind  
when it is changing?  
Do you listen to your child  
when he's crying?  
Do you listen to the truth  
behind the lies?  
Do you listen to your love  
as it is dying?

Do you listen to the heart  
deep within you?  
Do you listen to the earth  
as it's revolving?  
Do you listen when God  
tries to reach you?  
When you listen,  
your soul keeps evolving.

### **I'll Be Your Hero**

When you have adventures,  
I've been there before;  
I know what's waiting  
behind the door.

When danger's ahead,  
I'll clear the way;  
whatever goes wrong,  
I will save the day.

When something's broken,  
I'll get it fixed;  
just like a magician,  
I've got some tricks.

When there's a choice  
you have to make,

I'll give you advice  
you'd be wise to take.

When you have need  
of a helping hand,  
I'll be by your side  
to take a stand.

When times are dark  
and you can't see the light,  
whatever your demons,  
I'll join in the fight.

When you're ready  
to call it quits,  
I'll help you find  
a solution that fits.

When your heart is broken  
and you've lost your faith,  
I'll help guide your soul;  
we'll both find grace.

When your life becomes  
too hard to take,  
I'll take you aside for  
a well-earned break.

Whenever you need me,  
I'll be your hero;  
the score - us: a trillion,  
the bad guys: zero.

### Intimidated

Men are often intimidated  
by my personal power.  
Most want to play the big tree  
to a somewhat wilted flower.

My confidence, independence  
and willful attitude  
are more than most can handle,  
though I'm never harsh or rude.

I just know what I want  
and will not settle for less.  
I try to keep things simple,  
thus eliminating stress.

I won't give up my life  
or anything in it for a man.  
He must willingly accept that  
and take me as I am.

A relationship with me

is always highly rated  
by a man who is not  
so easily intimidated.

### Lavender Lipstick

Sitting at the bar  
cradling a Bloody Mary  
in her long, bony fingers  
she has dark blue eye shadow,  
rouged cheeks  
and lavender lipstick.

She stares in the  
mirrored wall behind  
rows of liquor bottles,  
blind to her reflection.

Her gaze is internal,  
looking for a part of herself  
she lost long ago.

Like her makeup,  
her hopes and dreams  
haven't changed  
in thirty years.

She would never find  
what she had  
once been looking for.

With a deep sigh,  
she comes out  
of her trance  
and heads home.

All that remains is the  
imprint on the empty glass  
of her lavender lipstick.

### Little White Lies

We tell each other  
little white lies  
so as not to  
upset the balance.

Harmless at first,  
the lies keep  
our life quiet,  
the water undisturbed.

One is stacked  
atop the others  
until the pile  
threatens to fall,

leaning precariously  
to one side.

As the lies crash down,  
exposed at last,  
the truth will finally  
have found its voice,  
but we won't be around  
to hear it.

### One Step Ahead

To look ahead  
in preparation  
takes strength and  
determination.

Taking what the  
past has taught;  
in self-awareness  
always caught.

Learning from  
all past mistakes;  
distilling truth from  
all the fakes.

Trying hard not  
to fall behind;  
all battles fought  
are in the mind.

The tears fall as  
our hearts are bled;  
trying to stay  
one step ahead.

### The Next Time Around

My words embrace you  
like a ghost in the fog;  
when I reach for you,  
my hand touches empty air.

Would you even know me  
in another life?  
Would our souls be  
drawn together again?

Are we just biding time  
until the next life,  
the next possible  
soul mate?

Will be we lovers,  
neighbors or strangers  
the next time around?

### The Poetry Flu

The poetry flu came  
without warning, a virus  
sending its bacteria  
pulsing through my veins.

It secrets from my pores;  
it drips from my runny nose;  
it burns my forehead;  
it congests my lungs;  
it churns in my stomach;  
it catches in my throat;  
it hurts my limbs;  
it throbs in my head;  
it makes me tremble;  
it forms goose bumps under my skin.

As the flu ravages my body  
I finally collapse in exhaustion,  
vomiting a steady stream  
of poetry  
onto the paper.

### There, But Not

A shadow on the wall;  
a ghost in my heart;  
a drop of glistening morning dew;  
the pale blue of a summer sky;  
the shrill cry of a hungry sparrow;  
a blanket of fog hanging in mid-air.

Proud, yet insecure;  
tangible yet untouchable;  
visible yet unreachable.

Your reflection in the mirror  
laughs at my vain attempts  
to capture your essence.

You remain on the border of our page,  
on the outskirts of our life,  
leaning against the doorway,  
not bothering to come in;  
unable to give or receive.

You're there, but not.