

# **RECOLLECTIONS**

(of a little girl)



by

**Jacqueline M. Yohe**

*Also by Jacqueline Albert Yohe*

**“Spirit Led and Free To Be”**

© 1999

This book is dedicated to that higher power  
Guiding me  
through the healing process into the light  
and  
To the lonely ones  
Who fill the loneliness in me

**“THEME”**

by

Carl Spitteler

Translated by Margarete Muensterberg

Bell, my silver-tongued bell,  
Oh, thy secret prithe tell:  
Dwellst where bats and night-owls roam,  
Lonely in thy moldered home;  
Tell me, whence thy solemn ring?  
And who taught thee, pray, to sing?

When in gloomy shaft I lay,  
Night of hell I saw alway.  
In this tower high and free  
Through the whirling winds I see  
Human sorrow graced by soul.  
And thou wonderst why I toll?

(“THEME” by Carl Spitteler, is reprinted from *Poetry for Pleasure THE HALLMARK BOOK OF POETRY*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1960)

## Author Introduction

I've been asked numerous times to write this story of my life, and now the process begins with this, an autobiographical sketch of my recollections.

My name is Jacqueline, although many insist on calling me Jackie. As a child, I remember saying "My name is Jacqueline!" None took that seriously as far as I could tell. My paternal Aunt Margaret would tease me by saying "Jake" and once again, I would turn my head from her, put my chin as far back over my right shoulder as it would go, tilt that chin as far up as my neck would stretch, and repeat "My name is Jacqueline!" My name was the only thing that was truly mine. It was my name, chosen by my mother, and that name was and is Jacqueline.

With love in remembering my Aunt Margaret (Albert) Walls, my father's only sister, I write an occasional poem, or song lyrics, under the, also-known-as name, Jake Albert. When I write as Jake, it is from a masculine perspective within my feminine frame of mind. Jake was a canary – trapped in a cage – a vicious life cycle. Intricate webs of love hate love hate love hate. A life of push and pull, love you, love you not. Love me love me not – I love you – love you – not now.

I feel it is an important story to tell. The story of what children do remember and of how the pain from abuse – whether physical, sexual, verbal, all leave wounds too deep to cauterize. When the scars of abuse are carried forth into the life of the adult, the hurt perpetuates itself, and one little girl asks forever "Do you love me?" or "Why do you love me?" or "Why don't you love me?" or "How long will you love me?"

In the asking of "Do you love me?" and the response "Of course I do!" hurt children, as adults, make poor choices in all their future relationships which cause additional scarring and irrevocable loss of self esteem.

Hence, pull you to me – push you away from me, and when the pain becomes too unbearable – then – my ultimate payback – I will leave you. I will run away, until the next victim says "Jackie – I love you."

I didn't realize, until it was way too late, that a child who has been institutionalized needs permission to say "No" and that I had not ever been given that permission. Never had the permission to leave. I just did not know how to say "No" and certainly did not know, when I finally did say "No" how to get the abusers to stop – to listen. It was much easier to just accept what was going on at the moment, to dissociate, and to cry after the moment, or years, had passed. Life became an issue of control over my feelings. You hurt me and I'll hurt you back by leaving you. I will abandon you.

So to all who would listen – stop the abuse – listen to the children who say "No!" And to all who abused me or my sisters, you know who you are; you know what you have done. To those who have since died, I imagine you have gone to hell – without us! No more secrets will be kept by the Albert girls!

To all those who are being abused – get out – tell now! Stop the cycle! I give you permission to say "No." I give you the permission to leave. You do not have to suffer. You are Free to Be! To those who can't stop being abusers – get help – pick up a phone and say "I need help to stop hurting those I love." Say "I am Free to Be a good person!"

**Many of your stories will never be told. Many of your hurts can never be healed. But, if in the “tolling” of my story, just one of you gets out of a bad situation, then my writing and your reading of this story will be the reward to us both.**

**God bless you in your struggle to heal your inner child. Love yourself first, as hard or impossible as that may seem at this moment. Have courage – renew your faith in God and yourself. Seek help now.**

**My love and healing to you all ...**

**Jacqueline**

# **KEEP ME**

**(For Jake – the canary)**



**Wrap me in feathers  
Bright, canary yellow  
Surround me with mirrors  
That reflect quiet companionship.**

**Keep me in a sunlit room  
Away from ill winds that blow  
Drape my cage with softness  
To protect me from the harshness of humankind.**

**Provide cool bathing waters  
And ample space to dry my ruffled down  
Feed my hunger with the grains of life  
Sprinkled with the fresh fruits of past efforts**

**Croon soothing melodies  
As I sway rhythmically on my perch  
Let me slumber  
With head tucked safely under my wing**

**Turn off your harsh lights tonight  
Perhaps the new morning sun  
Will force a canary song  
From my soul – once again.**

## The Albert Girls

[Mother is taking our picture]



Jackie, Kay, Margie, Patty

## **My First Recollection**

I'm writing this story  
So all will know  
No one saved the children  
a long time ago

My first memory lingers  
On a crib and a wall  
And stretching so far  
I worried I'd fall

I turned my thoughts  
To the paint on that wall  
And found if I picked  
It wasn't white at all.

I picked and I picked  
That paint from that wall  
And found it was green  
And not white at all.

I stretched and I worked  
From that little bed  
The blood from my fingers  
Turned the green to red.

There weren't any sheets  
No one was there  
Except for the crib  
That room was bare.

Where are my sisters?  
This bed is a mess  
I need a diaper  
And a little dress.

Dad is mean  
He hurts us all  
I hope he won't catch me  
As I pick on this wall.

I was so worried  
He'd come through that door  
And thought that my sisters  
Weren't there anymore.

Soon my wall will all be green  
And no one can hurt  
Who won't be seen.

I don't think I cared  
Didn't care at all  
As long as I picked  
At that paint  
On that wall.

## THE SECOND RECOLLECTION

(of a little girl)

*At this recollection ...*

I am sitting in a very, very large car. I'm amazed because I can see my feet sticking straight out in front of me. I've never seen my feet with shoes and socks on them this way before. I have on black, oh, so shiny, shiny, black shoes. I'm very small, and this car is so big, that my legs stick straight out in front of me and my shoes don't even hang over the edge of this big, old seat.

This is a big car – the seats are gray. I don't like the musty smell in this car. I'm sitting sandwiched between my other sisters in the back seat of this car. I don't wonder where we are going, and I don't know who is driving. Someone is in the front seat – it must be our great-aunt Emmie on the passenger side, because I am not feeling scared – not feeling excited – just sitting here looking at my shiny, shiny, black shoes – sticking straight out in front of me.

My oldest sister, Patty (Patricia – sometimes I call her “Snicia” because I'm too little to be able to say Patricia!) Snicia is sitting to my right – by the window. The people in the front seat are whispering. We are sitting very still and way too quiet. Snicia says “sh” to me – I think she might be crying. Kay is sitting next to me – on my left, and she might be crying too. I want her to look at my shiny, shiny, black shoes, but she just nods her head at me, puts her “sh” finger to her lips, and pats me gently on my leg every now and then. I love my sister Kay...

Margie must be sitting next to Kay by the other window. Margie and I are not crying. I bet we don't like it that we aren't sitting next to each other though. I love my sister Margie. I can't see out the windows nor can I see who is in the front seat – the seat in front of us is too high, and there is a big space between my feet and the back of that front, gray padded big car seat. I'm aware that Snicia wants me to sit very still and that she wants me to be very, very quiet. (She always tells me what a good girl I am!) I love my sister, Snicia, and so I'm quiet - as quiet ever was, and keep all my attention on my shiny, shiny, black little shoes.

At this recollection, during the year of 1944, I am two years old. Margie is three. Kay is six, and Snicia must be eight years old, and ...

This is the car that took my three older sisters and me to 2126 Market Street in Wheeling, West Virginia, to Saint Alphonsus Orphanage, and we were to call it “*The Home.*”

Where is our baby brother, Adrian? He is only two or three months old. We call him Wimpy because he cries so much! Maybe he is being good in the front seat, and I just can't hear him. We girls just love our baby brother – even if he does cry!

We don't wonder – and we don't ask – where our mother is. We don't wonder or care – where our Dad is. (Maybe he is driving!)

No need to cry anymore about what is behind us- but lots of tears on the road ahead. I wonder – when will the tears be over? I wonder – when will I be too old to cry?