





Trees

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer

Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed--and gazed--but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth

Betty Jane Coatney Exter was born October 7, 1921 in Weed California to Fred and Gladys Coatney. She was the older of two daughters. Betty grew up in Montague California; and at the age of 17 eloped with the neighborhood postman, Wally and Betty were married in New Mexico, but unfortunately due to Wally's WW1 injuries, he died leaving Betty his Oldsmobile and a thousand dollars.

In 1939 Betty found employment with Albert Exter as the bookkeeper for his mortuary where Betty met and subsequently married Thelbert Lauren Exter (Thel), Albert's son. They were married and moved to California where they raised two sons, Lauren and Robert.

In 1979 Betty and Thel moved to Redding California and enjoyed many years of bird watching, photographing, and identifying many birds and wildflowers.

Betty thrived in the great outdoors. She loved the mountains, streams, and the abundance of wild life in both the animal and plant form. Nature was her backyard. She and Thel spent many years exploring many of the United States, their individual interests and talents befriended well making them a very gifted team. The family and many others enjoyed the resulting and spectacular slide shows and award winning photos. Thel got many credits and awards but Betty found his subjects and was a great supporter of his art.

Betty also became a gardener in the truest sense. She grew and harvested dozens of varieties of herbs, trees, plants, and flowers. She gardened in harmony with nature and lovingly found the methods to coax birds and squirrels into her sanctuary where they were abundantly fed and admired from her notorious kitchen nook; the place where all family jokes, arguments, discussions, and many nature lessons were held.

She was a good and loving mother, a sometimes cantankerous mother in law, and a crisp no nonsense grandmother. Beneath it all she held her family in great affection.

Her great love of nature, creatures, wild flowers, trees, herb, plants and vegetables remained with her into her twilight years. She enthusiastically shared her significant knowledge.

She was a forthright individual, sometimes cranky but equally full of fun. She had many humorous and some good historical family tales which she was more than happy to pass down. She was an accomplished seamstress, a beautiful woman who loved to dress up, but was equally comfortable in her garden clothes.

She had many friends over the years from a variety of backgrounds. She also had many surprises and one never felt too sure about what might come next when visiting. She was a worker and she performed many kindnesses for others.

Her final years she was often crusty, calling a spade a spade, and too bad if you didn't like it. Her last few months were difficult as she was just plum worn out and tired.

We remember her today and we honor her. She was of course a great matriarch for our family.

