POET:
HELEN HARRINGTON
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A 12 minute video produced by Kelli Bixler

Helen Harrington is an 84-year-old poet and farmer from Iowa whose work celebrates the song of the earth and the self.

In this visual essay the viewer is given the opportunity to really hear, feel and appreciate her poetry, as well as meet a living poet who is able to communicate her passion for living and writing.

Transcript of Helen Harrington's poems spoken in the video POET: HELEN HARRINGTON
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In This Hush

Do not move. Stand still.
Do not speak. Listen.
Feel Time's pressing will.
Hear the distance glisten.

There is more of you, 
and of me, than what we are.
Somewhere beyond our view, 
somewhere very far,

Something of us beats.
Do not think, but sense
us in the obsolete 
and in imminence.

What we cannot find 
in the busy rush
of self may be divined 
in this hush —
The Lost

This is our name, and this our turn of bone, and this the color of our eyes and hair. We take our coat, our character, our chair, the state and town by which we shall be known...

Then who, thereafter, knows where we have flown? Who has really seen us anywhere? We hear ourselves, like spectres, creak the stair, but have we ever caught us there alone?

I think we shall not find us on our street. I wonder if we ever knew our town... There are so many things... The world is rife and we may be too occupied to meet for looking for us, running up and down. The word we are escapes us in the life.
I Could Not Lose You

If I should lose you, I should seek and find you once again in hyacinths and dew and rain and roses. And I should be struck blind by fragrance, knowing it was you!

If I should lose you, I should look and see you, bending, golden, to caress my cheek in sun and breeze and I could never be so lonely, then, since we had ways to speak!

Oh, I should search for you in what we knew and loved together, stars and soaring wings—if I should lose you. But I could never lose you since you are part of these eternal things!
In the Dark

There is a moment in the dark to which I wake sometimes. As stark as a shriek in silence, it says, "Hark!"

Without a sound it is a word almost missed, caught barely, heard mysteriously, its point deferred.

And if one wants to understand what is meant by it or planned, why, that is too much to demand.

To specify is to labor under a misconception, and to blunder. To understand it is to wonder.
Not Lonely

I am not lonely, but alone.

Around me here, today, tonight, no human figure, voice or ear and, should I speak, no one to hear.

Those whom I love are gone a while, so I've conversed with clouds. A mile, or several miles, I've gone with them, listening to the wind's slow song.

There was a horse that made a view in motion for me, running, rearing, and birds bound home to nests, declaring sunset plainly as sky reddening.

I've been alone, but captivated by so much, and reacquainted with beauty—wonders that continue, their reach increased, their worth re-stated.
Intercourse

Skin to skin is not,
bone to bone is not
eye to eye.

Eye to eye is not.

Sleep with me, love; we will lie
nowhere close though we knot
limbs together. We can look
at foreign buildings in each other's
eyeballs, caught
like tourists without a guidebook.

Flesh, like proximities,
smothers us. We enter each other only
by devious ways. Absence
is the truer presence.

Stranger, do not be lonely.
I love you through continence.
These skies, hills, trees between us bring
us face to face.
Passage

Where do I travel, where do I go,
blown by the wind, whirled by the snow,
driven and carried, and pushed and drawn
always going and never gone?

I clutch at the mountain, I grasp at the sky,
I cling to the rivers as I stream by
but all of these murmur, "Rise" or "Fall"...
"We are not what you want— what you want—at all!"

I cannot be what I want to be —
I cannot even guess or see —
In land and water, air and sun,
between me and myself I run.

And never I think to stay or stop,
but I am torn from the mountain top
and never I think I have a home,
but I am swept away by foam.

And helplessly, from wind and grass,
I reach for me, and see me pass.
Crisis Hour

There comes to all of us, sometime, an hour when we cannot depend on fairies, elves or super-persons with unbounded power. Then we must learn, somehow, to save ourselves.

We must call on all we can of reason, endurance, courage and maturity, rise above our weaknesses and for a season be great enough, be all we have to be.

Then of our own strength, stripped of illusions, with what we have, doing what we can do, make our finalities, reach our own conclusions, define the real, divide the false from true.
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