

A winter landscape featuring a snow-covered dune in the foreground. A dead, bleached tree stands prominently on the right, with a bird's nest made of twigs perched high in its branches. The background shows a line of trees under a clear blue sky.

MARVEL'S MEANDERINGS

*A collection of four decades
worth of thoughts & dreams*

Marvel Henning

MARVEL'S MEANDERINGS

Published by Betty James

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These selections are a few of the more popular ones from the past years. Again, my thanks to Leigh & Neil Boughen for precise typesetting and preparation of the manuscript for printing. Special thanks to Betty McIntyre for her poem “*Don’t Weep For Me*”.

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INTRODUCTION

Through the years I have wandered about the countryside, observing and noting nature in all its beauty, whether violent storms and turbulent winds, or placid sunny days and calm, clear nights. Because I have a deep appreciation for all these things, I noted them in detail, most, with the eye of an artist. Some I have captured in sketches & paintings, others only in my mind's eye, but I wish to share them with any who are similarly interested. This compilation is from selections from my many columns called "*The Nail Keg*" which has run in a Lakefield weekly for many years.

In the beginning of my columns, I noted general local news and personal experiences. A friend encouraged me to pattern the selections after famous columnist Gregory Clark who wrote for years his column, "*The Packsack*". In searching for a name, I wanted one that would be a receptacle for all sorts of writing, and came up with "*The Nail Keg*" inspired by an actual nail keg in a general store in Aultesville (near Cornwall) that held a collage of tool handles such as axe, hoe, rake, cant hook etc.

I hope I have succeeded in presenting a literary collage, although far short of Greg Clark's accomplishments.



CHAPTER 1

THE SPRING

The day was sunny with September warmth, but when we left the meadow to enter the bush, the overhanging hardwoods standing sentinel between the hill and creek made it feel cool, and slightly damp. Eel's Creek ran dark and glittering on our right; the hill dominated the land rising to the left, clad in hardwood and interspersed with pine and cedar clusters. The path we walked, begun by animals and worn smooth by the boots of river drivers decades ago was choked by clinging berry canes, and hoards of white asters, beginning at the meadow's edge, snaking through a sea of bamboo grass that further along gave way to brake ferns.

The damp leaves cushioned our footsteps, and at one point the ground was quite spongy where a mole had tunnels running here and there into the roots of hazel brush.

We topped a knoll; the ground fell abruptly to almost creek level before beginning to climb again, and we heard the gentle swish of water caressing the banks, and the gurgle of content as it surged past some weathered sticks of an almost-submerged beaver dam. From a distance came the gentle rumble of rapids.

The hill to our left tumbled almost to the path, and I paused, dismayed by the silence; right ahead where I expected to be greeted with the melodic tinkle of water trickling from rock to rock into a little pool, was silence instead. We had anticipated getting a drink of clear,

CHAPTER 33

FOR THE GOOD TIMES

Country music has been a part of my life as long as I can remember; sometimes music expresses our thoughts and feelings more clearly than we can find conversation to do so. It is strange, how some simple words, a pleasant melody can trigger memories achingly clear: I was driving along when the truck radio gave forth with one of my favourite and most treasured songs. Ray Price was singing *"For the Good Times"*. That song just says it all for a relationship that is ending. My memory harkened back to an evening in the back kitchen of the old farmhouse when I played it.

"Don't look so sad; I know it's over.

But life goes on, and this old world will keep on turning."

A very treasured relationship was ending, through circumstances beyond anyone's control, but neither of us would admit it.

"Let's just be glad we had some time to spend together.

There's no need to watch the bridges that we're burning."

So true. I will remember all our times together, good and bad, with no regrets.

"I'll get along; you'll find another,

And I'll be here if you decide you ever need me.

*Don't say a word about tomorrow or forever;
There'll be time enough for sadness when you leave me."*

There was never another; the sands of time just ran out, while we waited. We didn't ask for impossible commitments, and there has been lots of time for sadness.

*"Lay your head upon my pillow;
Hold your warm and tender body close to mine;
Hear the whisper of the raindrops flowing soft upon the window,
And make believe you love me one more time
For the good times."*

The raindrops have been teardrops through the years, and in my heart we said "goodbye" that night.

I drove down the highway, taking you almost home, and when your protests grew too strong, I surrendered the wheel to you. You called me stubborn, and I was, because I cared so much and wanted to spare you discomfort. I climbed down from the cab with a kiss, and a promise to "See you". You drove away, and I walked back the direction from which I'd come, feeling the sharp chill of winter in the offing, and the cold chill of dread in my heart. I saw the tail lights recede, then turned and walked, not looking back again. A chapter of my life had finished and that door closed with finality. Two weeks later I was one of the mourners at your funeral, just one of the "hunt gang" to all appearances.

Love may come into a life many times, but always there is one that is exceptional, unique, and memorable. You were mine; and bittersweet memories run rampant every time I hear that song, "*For The Good Times*".

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born and raised and still residing in the country, Marvel has a unique view of the ever-changing world around her. She has been engaging readers through her local newspaper column *The Nail Keg* since 1963.

Marvel's Meanderings – a collection of four decades worth of thoughts and dreams – is Marvel's third book.





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