

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS – 20

JULY – SEPTEMBER, 2010

Monday, July 5, 2010. Hello, Everyone! Welcome to the 20th edition of my journal / newsletter called, in brief, Penny 20. This month started off with a whirl of activity, as July 1 was the first Thursday, hence, time for Scripture and Prayer with Verna and Friends. And then, so quickly, it was over – in one sense, at least. In the spiritual realm – the one that really matters, and the reason for our services – there may have been results that will NEVER end. That is our prayer. “Hear our prayer, O Lord.”

July also came in awash with color! I’m referring, of course, to fireworks. I saw my first display on Friday, July 2, from the window in my room. They came from a nearby town, and were truly beautiful! If I saw no other this year, I decided, I would be satisfied. Then came yesterday – Sunday, July 4! My plan was to enjoy the concert and fireworks that comes from Washington, D.C. via Public TV. At 8 PM, when I turned on my set, I suddenly thought of the large flat screen mounted on the wall of our 4th floor day room, across the hall from the elevator lobby. I drove out to look and found the screen dark and the room empty. Next I went to the nurse and asked her to turn on the set. She gladly complied, adjusting the volume to a welcoming level.

And the people who were sitting in the lobby DID come – Ruth, Ethel, and Alice. Various staff members also came in to watch the concert for a few minutes at a time. I was so glad to be watching the program with my friends, rather than alone in my room! Ruth, anxious to see whatever fireworks displays might come from neighboring towns after dark, asked the nurse to raise the shades. What a bonus was in store for us when the shades were up: a beautiful, deep pink sunset! “God’s painting,” I typed. Ruth, sitting next to me, saw the message and took great pleasure in it. What fun!

Then the skies turned dark, both here in New York and in Washington, and the fireworks began! To our delight, we had a “3-D” show. In the center, on the big screen, were the spectacular fireworks from our nation’s capitol, further enhanced by a stirring, simultaneous rendition of the 1812 Overture, while local displays were visible from the day room windows (looking northward on the Hudson River), and from the lobby windows (looking southward on the river). Generally I start getting ready for bed shortly after 9:00. Novelette, my aide yesterday, understood the situation, and let me stay up later, a kind gesture that I appreciated. Finally I was all tucked into my bed, from which I watched the last of the fireworks (looking southward on the river). A memorable evening, indeed!

Friday, July 9, 2010. Several times a year we have a month where there are 5 weeks between services, instead of the usual 4. I like those months, and this is one of them. I feel like there is more than one extra week, that there is breathing room where I can rest, either doing no computer work at all, or working on some short creative projects that have no pressing deadline. What I did this past week was write a long poem for a friend who will have her 95th birthday in August, Lord willing. I had fun doing that. I also enjoyed the memories of Lynne that the poem conjured up.

Don’t get me wrong here. I am not tired of writing the monthly services or the quarterly Penny newsletters, and both projects give me PLENTY of opportunity to be creative. I just need a vacation once in a while. The 5-week months let me have it, and I am grateful!

Wednesday, July 14, 2010. This is a P.S. to the above story, hence I am putting it out of chronological order. I decided to share with you the poem about Lynne that I wrote last week, partly because I want to introduce you to this wonderful woman who is part of my life by God’s design. I first met Lynne, who lives in Brooklyn, in the late 1990s when she attended a special service at the Community Church of Yorktown, where I was serving as pastor. She was truly SHOCKED to find that this church was being led by a WOMAN!! At a reception held afterwards in a private home in Yorktown,

she questioned me sternly, especially after she discovered that we both had a similar background of Bible knowledge and faith. Basically she wanted to know what motivated me to become a pastor, when she had always thought the Scriptures forbade such a thing. Lynne herself is fond of telling this next part: I looked at her and calmly said, "The Lord called me." There was nothing she could say against that! All her objections drained away in a moment, and Lynne was in a new place, set free from the restrictions of the past and ready for more adventures with God! I understood, for I had been down the same path years before.

What followed were several years of phone calls, visits, and correspondence, in which, along with notes, we exchanged our poetry and other writings. Both of us have profited from our meeting, which was surely arranged by our wonderful God! Here, now, is the poem.

To Lynne, On Her Birthday

By Verna Kwiatkowski. A Sky View poem.

My dear friend Lynne is turning ninety-five!
Limited physically, she's very much alive.
In fact, in the spirit, she continues to thrive!

Here, in brief, is her life philosophy:
"I'm happy, glad, and free," says she,
"For Jesus, my Savior, has died for me."

Simple words, yet not really simplistic;
Easy to say, yet profound, and mystic.
To Lynne they are simply – realistic!

I know another thing that defines my dear friend:
She lives in the present, yet looks to the end,
And welcomes the peace that our Savior will send.

Heaven is as dear to her as any place on earth,
Even Jamaica, her country, the place of her birth.
When Heaven fills the heart, things lose their worth!

If God's trumpet should sound before either one dies,
Changed, we will meet as we rise through the skies
On our way to the place where there are no goodbyes –

Like the ones we have said in places old and new,
In Yorktown, and Brooklyn, and twice at Sky View.
Our Home lies ahead; I'll share it, Lynne, with you!

I hope these thoughts will bring you such pleasure
That you'll think you have had a long visit to treasure!
God gives us blessings – joy beyond measure!

To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Saturday, July 10, 2010. Yesterday Cliff Cullum came for his regularly scheduled weekly visit. We talked about many things, including the need for Bible overview classes. I thought of the Bible Basics seminars I used to teach, and felt prompted to tell him about a dream I had earlier this week. In the dream I still had PLS (primary lateral sclerosis), but had been given a reprieve, in that temporarily I could walk and talk again. I didn't know how long the reprieve would last, but decided to teach Bible Basics one more time, with classes beginning in September. I was in a church in Yorktown that I did not recognize, talking with a visiting couple about the course, "Where will it be held?" they asked, for they were interested. "I'm not sure yet," I answered, "but it will be local."

As I was typing, Cliff said to me, "You really liked teaching, didn't you?" I nodded and continued typing: "I was born a teacher. I knew it when I was 6." Just then I began to cry – a PLS-induced cry that I could not control. I wasn't crying because I could no longer teach Bible Basics or because I regretted my condition. I started because the story was SWEET! I pictured myself as 6-year-old Verna discovering that I HAD to be a school teacher. I felt the joy of that discovery, plus the joy of all the wonderful teaching opportunities I have had, and it was overwhelmingly sweet. Once tears began flowing, I had a hard time stopping. How glad I am for the family members and friends who understand what is going on with me and are not frightened by my runaway emotions!

One of the topics Cliff and I were discussing concerned the various ways God speaks to us. It was not until I was writing this Penny entry that I realized God may have been speaking to me at age 6. The thought that popped into my mind one day in my first grade classroom – "I want to be a school teacher when I grow up" – has many of the elements of being prompted by God, such as surprise, delight, a sense of purpose, of "rightness" about the idea. God called young Samuel; surely it is possible that he called me, too – and you!

I am fully aware that I am still teaching now, and I still enjoy it. My friend Carolyn Burke supplied me with a recent example. As reported in Penny 19, she accompanied me to a prayer meeting on June 8. During the program, she read my poem God's Grace, which includes the following lines:

How could I complain
When blessings fall like rain?
And how could I grouse
While living in this house?

On June 9 I received a heartwarming email from Carolyn, which said, in part: "Had to let you know that whenever I am with you I learn something. I loved your poem but I did not know what grouse meant. I just knew it rhymed with house. So this morning I went to Webster and found out it meant to grumble or complain. Thanks for the lesson. You're teaching even when you don't know it (smile)." I smiled with Carolyn then, and I'm smiling now. God is good!

Monday, July 12, 2010. I still feel like I am on vacation! Here in the northeast July has brought us a prolonged heat wave, with a string of days where the temperature was at 100 degrees or more. The humidity was also high, making the days seem even hotter. On July 7 our son David, who lives in North Carolina, inserted some humor – as well as perspective! – into the situation by sending the following email: "If any of our northern relatives want to come south to enjoy some cooler weather, our place is ready for you! We are topping out in the 91-95 degree range these days, which I believe would be a nice break for you!" I really appreciate that type of humor!

On the other hand, I knew of the heat wave only from TV reports and from what people told me. I do have access to the outdoors, yet rarely go out, mainly because of my allergy / sinus problems. Besides that, I am quite content to be indoors; I have no urge to go outside just because it's summer. My new air conditioner works well. In my room the temperature usually stays between 72 and 77, comfortable for me. People are different, including in the way they react to the weather. That helps make life interesting, doesn't it?

Friday, July 16, 2010. Just after 8:00 this morning, I woke up to discover that I was in an uncomfortable position that I could not change on my own. Specifically, I needed to be pulled up on the bed, a job that usually requires 2 people. Knowing the aides would be getting the residents ready for breakfast at that time, I decided to distract myself from the discomfort by listening to an audio-book disk, and ring the bell later. Then about 8:15 Perry, my regular aide for the past few months, came into my room, at least an hour and a half earlier than he ever did before. I was so glad to see him! In response to my request, he used the draw sheet to pull me up by himself, where I rested comfortably until he came to get me up at 10:45. This story has the fingerprints of God, my Main Aide, all over it, and I am grateful to him AND to Perry.

Saturday, July 17, 2010. This past week I read via audiobook Housekeeping, by Marilynne Robinson, in which she has a character say, "I find pictures where there are no pictures, like in the veins on the back of my hand." That really caught my attention, for I realized that I do the same thing, only I find them in the tiles on my bathroom floor. The 1-inch square tiles are blue-grey in color, mottled with white. I am positive that the tile manufacturers did not put pictures on any of the squares, nor did they put 2 or 3 tiles together in such a way that they would form larger pictures. Yet I have found nearly 2 dozen of them during the 4 and a half years I have been examining the tiles. Here's what I have found so far:

4 flowers: a pansy, a portulaca, a dahlia, and a sunflower (I limited myself to 4); a mushroom, spread over 3 tiles; 2 items spread over 2 tiles: a fairy and a piece of jewelry – a pin, shaped like a rose; a bookend; a slightly bent jack, from a game of jacks; a painting of ballerinas in a studio; a bouquet of flowers in a ceramic vase; a boot; a hair bow; an arrow; a moth; a flag ornament; a turkey; a top (the child's toy); a heart; a tree; a child's alphabet block with the letter Z (or is it an N?); an anchor; a candle arrangement on a window sill; and a hot air balloon.

I was anxious to see if I could name all of them without being in the bathroom, and was pleased to see that I could! I saw the floor in my mind, and there were the images! I think this mental exercise has been good through the years for developing both my imagination and my memory. I never dreamed it would show up in a Penny essay! Seeing pictures where there are no pictures: a good way to pass the time!

Tuesday, August 3, 2010. In the past two weeks I did plenty of writing, though not for Penny 20. I finished the service for August 5th; wrote a page for the next Sky View newsletter; composed 2 poems: a long one called *Pleasure Beyond Measure*, which is now on the homepage of my website, and a short one titled *The Choice*; and handled a number of business matters that involved writing. What really surprises me is the poetry. At the moment I am actually working on 2 more poems, and finding such enjoyment in doing so! The rhythm and the rhyming patterns differ, adding to the fun. I am truly grateful that I can still write. I have also made up my mind that when I can no longer write, I will still be grateful. In other words, it really doesn't matter; my life is in God's hands, and I am content.

Wednesday, August 4, 2010. Yesterday the maintenance crew at Sky View installed new window shades in the east wing of the 4th floor, which is where I live. Gone are the heavy, wooden-slatted, mahogany colored venetian blinds that served me so well the 4-1/2 years I have been here, and that were the source of one of my favorite stories, which I will tell you in a minute. The new shades are light beige in color and are made of a much lighter material. Double in thickness, they have an accordion-type pleating on both sides. We were told that the insulating quality the new shades bring to our windows was the reason for making the change.

The story I mentioned happened at least 4 years ago, and involves Margaret, the night aide about whom I have written many times. Back then, I went to bed with the 3 venetian shades at least part way up. It was dark outside, so there was no reason to lower them. Besides, I enjoyed glancing out the windows at the lights in the distance: those in buildings, plus the moving ones, indicating traffic

on the highways or trains coming from New York City. But when the aides came into my room between 2 and 3 AM, I always wanted my shades both lowered and closed, as I did not want the morning sun to wake me up.

This particular night Margaret brought the shades down and closed them with the slats facing downward. When I motioned with my hands that I wanted her to reverse the slats, she became annoyed and said, "What's the difference? Either way, they're closed!" Of course, I could not answer her question from my bed, but vowed I would do so as soon as I could get to my computer. The next night Margaret found on my table a note addressed to her, which said something like this:

If I could talk, this is what I would have said last night:

"There's a BIG difference between having the slats facing down and having them facing upward. When they are down, the sun shines right through them, but when they are up, the sun can't get through and the room remains very dark."

Margaret caught on, of course; never again did I have to tell her how to turn the shades! Margaret always refers to this incident as "our first fight." Through the years she repeated that story over and over to many people in my presence, and it always brings a smile. The most amazing thing to me is that Margaret kept the note! I have given her many poems and other writings since I have known her, but somehow the note has special meaning to her as well. Now that the venetian shades are gone, rather than let the story die, I have told it to you!

EPILOGUE: I'm writing this on Sunday, 6 days after the new shades were installed. Enough time has elapsed for me to give a few concluding thoughts on the subject. The venetian blinds were able to give me more nuanced light, in that the slats could be tilted slightly, or opened all the way, and slanted up or down. They could certainly make my room dark, and I liked that. They also were subject to mechanical difficulties, and they did not insulate us from the elements.

The new shades are opaque enough that when they are down, I can't see the outdoors through them. All I can see is a shadowy outline of the window frames themselves. BUT sunlight DOES come through! The last position the night shift puts me in is on my left side, facing the windows. Even with my eyes closed, I can tell if the sun is shining. (I wonder if our eyelids get thinner as we age?) On the other hand, I like the energy saving factor. And they are easy to operate: push up, pull down. Thank you, Sky View!

The bottom line is this: The old has gone; the new has come. It's up to me to adapt to the change. I'm well on my way to doing just that!

Tuesday, August 10, 2010. This morning I got a new feeding tube! My previous tube lasted only 5 months, and was compromised much of the time. When it began to smell, I could delay its replacement no longer! On Friday the 6th I went by ambulette to Dr. Martin's office in the Phelps Hospital complex, accompanied by Zonia, an aide from Sky View who has gone with me on previous trips. The doctor and I, after discussing my concerns and observations, came up with a plan that was carried out today.

The ambulette arrived EARLY – at 7:10 AM. Eileen, a night-shift aide, had me all washed and attired in a clean gown for my ride on a stretcher. Marty served as my aide today, an unexpected pleasure! After I was in a room in the ER, and the routine things had been done, a woman from the hospitality committee stopped by. Marty recognized her as Carmen, a member of the Yorktown United Methodist Church. What a great time the 3 of us had together in the presence of our Lord!

Dr. Martin arrived, went over the plans with me, and then started to work. Both of us were pleased when Plan A was successful: a bedside exchange. My old tube with its mushroom end was pulled out and a wider one with a balloon end inserted, all within a few minutes! No anesthesia this time!

When I realized it was over, I began to laugh my uncontrollable PLS laugh. Dr. Martin and Marty couldn't help but join in. The doctor told Marty he always thought my extreme emotions were due to anesthesia, but now he could see that he was wrong. Later, my daughter sent me an email that said, in part, "The highlight of the day for me (other than the success of the procedure, of course!) was to see Dr. Martin enjoying your laughter."

Thursday, August 12, 2010. Today I'm thinking back to a week ago, the day we had our service for the month of August. Musically, this service was different from any we have had before, in that our singing was accompanied by a combo comprised of Earl Brown at the piano, our son George on the cello, and his son Andrew on the violin. What joy their music brought to my heart! Andrew, who will be going away to college later this month, wanted to play in one more service before he left the area. I'm sure that's what prompted George to get his cello out of storage. Andrew started helping me with services when I lived in Drum Hill. He was only 12 at the time, yet week after week he arrived at Drum Hill with his parents to play the violin and to lead the congregation in readings. Thank you, Andrew! God bless you as you begin the next phase of your life with him.

Monday, August 16, 2010. It is now 5:00 PM. About 20 minutes ago my aide, Novelette Christie, told me that Friday will be her last day at Sky View. The news was not a total shock to me, for I knew she and her husband were hoping to move to Florida in the fall. I'm just glad she gave me enough time to gather up some writings for a parting gift. It may even include a new poem! We'll see. P.S. 8/17/10: I'm happy to say that I have the following poem for my gift:

FOR NOVELETTE

*By Verna Kwiatkowski. A Sky View poem.
On hearing that Novelette was leaving Sky
View and moving with her husband to Florida.*

Novelette – dear Novelette! –
You are an aide I will never forget.

Assigned to me just recently when I was distressed,
We worked well in unison, and both of us were blessed.
We sensed the eternal when we were together.
In Christ we are sisters, daughters of one Father.
And that will never change, even when we're apart.
What are a thousand miles, when we are joined by heart?
How dear will be the memories of fellowship so sweet,
With me, paralyzed, and you, "washing my feet."
You will long be remembered, all over this place.
You gave us music; dancing; and put a smile on each face.
Go with my blessing to the next part of your life,
And serve the Lord in Florida as husband and wife.
I will see you in Heaven – of this I have no doubt! –
Where I won't need an aide! We'll leap for joy and shout!

Novelette – dear Novelette! –
You are a person I will never forget!

Friday, August 20, 2010. The subject of this entry is SAYINGS. I have 3 short items that I want to remember, and this is the place to put them.

1. Leo and I continue to do word puzzles together during his visits, mainly Jumbles and Crypto-quotes. A recent cryptoquote impressed me: "To read without contemplating is like eating without digesting." This strikes me as so true! I know I need a lot of time to think, to meditate – and here, in the nursing home, I have the time!

2. A few days ago my computer shut down while I was typing. I knew it needed to be turned off for a couple minutes and then turned back on, a job I cannot do myself. Diane, our social worker, came in to help me. "Does it need re-booting?" she asked. "We all need re-booting at times, don't we?" "What an interesting analogy!" I thought. That is one that deserves meditation!

3. Yesterday I attended the monthly service given by the Lutheran pastor from Croton. As I have done before, at the close of the service I gave him 2 of my recent poems. He glanced at them and said I had a gift. "My poems don't usually rhyme," he said. "They are like this:

Roses are red, violets are bluish.
Some poems rhyme. This one doesn't."

That struck me as so funny that I immediately began laughing. It also brought to mind a similar incident from my teenage years. The local Washington Band was concluding a wonderful outdoor concert in Annville, Pennsylvania, my hometown, by playing a rousing march. Then some band members began to sing: "You may think that this is the end. Well, it is!" And, abruptly, the music ended! I was both shocked and delighted – just as I was yesterday with the non-rhyming poem! The reason I want to remember this little ditty is that I need funny things in mind strong enough to ward off unwanted crying spells. This should work well.

Saturday, August 21, 2010. Much to my surprise, Novelette did not come to work on Tuesday or Wednesday or even Thursday! Meanwhile, aided by George, Marty, and Leo, I assembled a gift for her, putting everything in a large manila envelope. I decided that if Novelette did not show up at all, I would obtain her address somehow and mail the envelope to her. But surely she would come on Friday, wouldn't she? No, she didn't! Somebody else put me to bed Friday night, and left me to my thoughts.

THE NIGHTTIME VISITOR

At 2:00 this morning Eileen came in to attend to me and, not far behind her, dressed in one of her uniforms, came Novelette! Oh, how warmly we greeted each other! Eileen fully entered into our joy. Eagerly, I directed Novelette to her gift and asked her to read her special poem. It was so good to be with her as she read the poem for the first time! Afterwards, she shared it with Eileen. Novelette said she was ready to come to Sky View for the evening shift yesterday when she got a call from Sky View asking if she could work the night shift instead. That is how I got to have such a private, special visit with my friend, one that was repeated at 6:00. At daybreak Novelette was gone, and my soul was satisfied.

Wednesday, September 1, 2010. Less than 2 months ago I wrote a short poem called *The Choice*, based on two Bible verses: *This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalm 118:24)* and *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again – rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)*. Isn't rejoice a happy word? I like the very sound of it! How easy it is to rejoice when things are going well for us, going according to our plans! But can we rejoice when our lives take unexpected turns, when things happen that are NOT according to our plans? The verses I quoted imply that rejoicing is to a daily conscious choice, regardless of our circumstances. What's more, rejoicing "in the Lord" is to be such a constant choice that it is always present in our lives, 24/7. If we follow these instructions, will this

put an end to our feelings of sadness, of sorrow? No, it will not, but I do believe those with a habitual layer of joy in place will go quickly to the God of all comfort in their times of upheaval, and find peace in the midst of their storms. Here is the poem:

THE CHOICE

*By Verna Kwiatkowski. A Sky View
poem based on the above verses.*

Make the choice to rejoice
Every day, all the way,
'Til we rise through the skies,
Home at last, sorrows past.

Beyond death, take a breath,
Glories sing to our King,
Free from all that used to stall.
This is right! Pure delight!

May the Future bring us nurture,
Strengthen us; remove life's fuss,
'Til it's automatic, not sporadic,
To make the choice to rejoice.

Tuesday, September 7, 2010. There will be a PS to the above story, I'm sure, but it hasn't happened yet! I'll let you know when it does. Meanwhile, I'll record some things that HAVE happened. On September 2 we held our monthly service here, featuring dramatic readings of Daniel 1 and 3. It's so interesting to have a concept in my mind and then see it unfold before me exactly as I had visualized, without rehearsals!

The Dyers spent parts of 3 days with us this past holiday weekend. MaryBeth was a big help to me, spending hours accomplishing the project list I had made for her. Then yesterday Marty came by for a brief visit, having returned from their holiday excursion. She "happened" to bring with her a needle and thread, perfect tools for a "stitch in time saves 9" project on my mental list. How I appreciate the many family members and friends who do anything they can to help me! Thanks!

What an interesting experience I had yesterday (Labor Day)! In the morning I turned on my TV set, expecting to find my usual weekday programs in progress. Instead, I found a fundraiser for the MDA underway. Intrigued by the music, I decided to watch at least until I found out what MDA stood for. I got far more than the answer to my question (Muscular Dystrophy Association); I also found a personal connection with the group. The MDA collects money for research on 43 neuro-muscular diseases. Chances are high that my disease, primary lateral sclerosis (PLS) is among the 43. If not, it can certainly benefit from the research. I kept the program on most of the rest of the day until it went off in the early evening. The whole broadcast was inspirational, especially the interviews with people who have these diseases, and their families. There were so many smiling children wearing braces or sitting in wheelchairs, as well as middle-aged people with ALS. Some of them couldn't speak, and used devices to communicate, like I do. All had positive attitudes, a real zest for living. I'm so glad I got to see the program, which, by the way, raised many millions of dollars for research.

Friday, September 17, 2010. What an enjoyable afternoon we had at Sky View today! Our talent show was held from 2:30 to 3:40. The activities department did a good job of weaving the various entries into a delightful whole. Our family was well represented. Leo made an appearance as Uncle Leo, the storyteller, telling a humorous story in his own special way, to the delight of us all. I teamed

up with my 4th floor resident friend Ruth Parton, in that she read aloud 2 of my poems: There Is a God and Counting My Blessings. Ruth did a fine job of interpreting my poems. Now we have one more shared experience to cherish!

Tuesday, September 28, 2010. I have 3 stories to tell, all of them related to stories already in this issue of my journal, and then I will close.

1. This is the P.S. I suspected I would write concerning the poem, The Choice. One of the first people to whom I gave a copy of that poem was my night aide, Margaret. As she read it by my bedside, she became excited and said this came just in time. Her beloved uncle had died in Jamaica, and the whole large family was going to there for the funeral the next week, Margaret said, explaining that she would be gone 6 days. "I will read this poem at Uncle's funeral," she added. I certainly thought of her while she was gone!

Then one night, there was Margaret, bursting with a story to tell, one that I was just as eager to hear. When she got to the church for the service, she said, she found herself listed on the program as one who would be singing, not speaking! She testified that God gave her a wonderful idea for a song, as well as the strength to sing it. Later, at a family gathering in a house, Margaret told about and read The Choice to her relatives. God connects his world-wide family in such interesting ways!

2. After Ruth read There Is a God and Counting My Blessings at the talent show, I gave her a special copy of my latest poem, The God of All Comfort, as a thank you gift. A couple days later she told me that she had been out to a family dinner at the end of Yom Kippur, and after the meal was over, she read all 3 poems to the assembled guests. These stories inspire me to keep on writing, and to God be the glory!

3. Novelette phoned Sky View about 10 days ago, talked with several people, and left this welcome message for me: she would not leave for Florida without coming to see me first. This past Saturday it happened! From my room I heard people happily greeting her as she came into view. Soon I knew why she wanted to see me: Novelette had written a BEAUTIFUL full-page personal poem for me! I am going to have it framed; what a wonderful memory! Novelette and her husband left for Florida yesterday.

Wednesday, September 29, 2010. I will close with one more awesome God-story. As in July, this was another month where there were 5 weeks between services: another "vacation"! Somewhere in the middle of the month I lost track of time, and happily began working on the October service, thinking I was right on schedule. Cliff tried to tell me I was a week early, but I could not understand at all what he meant. (Looking back, I think God KEPT me from comprehending, as he sometimes did in Bible stories, because God knew the plans he had for me.) When the truth finally dawned on me, I was almost finished with the service, which I based on my poem The God of All Comfort. How Cliff and I laughed over my silly misunderstanding! I decided to finish the project, even though it was early. My biggest problem was trying to stay within my self-imposed time limit of 40 minutes, as I had more ideas than I could use. Then I had a visit from my friend Vallie, who attends our Sky View services, and who leads a group called Praise Fellowship, with an outreach meeting on the second Tuesday of the month, 5 days after ours. Thinking I might attend, I asked about her meeting. It turned out the group had a need that I could fulfill – I am the speaker Oct. 12! Subject: The God of All Comfort – with no time constraints! More in Penny 21, Lord willing.