

## Our Stories – Dorothy Devine

Sometimes I amaze myself with my happiness. Then I smile.

### **Good morning, Star Shine There's Love in Your Eyes**

by Dorothy Devine

Sitting and sleeping are my days' majority  
Reading people-animal faces  
In the overlap of leaves out my window.

My CNA's patois, dreadlocks hit the table  
As she hides her laugh,  
'Oh, Dorothy, You are something else!'

I love weekends the most, stay in my robe  
Decide not to read The New Yorker  
Or anything about Trump..

Homebound now except for medical visits  
I draw down inside myself  
Thinking of doing things, then not.

Shall I roll my walker to the kitchen  
For a bowl to start a manicure?  
...No.

Shall I check obituaries to see if one of my  
'Mets sisters/brothers' have died?  
...No.

Instead I ask ALEXA to play  
'Good Morning, Star Shine'  
I am not in much pain, what I am is  
Clumsy, tired, dizzy, dull, a fall risk.

Sitting in a recliner as night  
Now greys and deepens.

And I wait.

Published in UUCSC News and Updates, November 27, 2020

### **I Want to be Remembered As A Poet**

by Dorothy Devine

There is a different story

Before we met and the world changed  
Immediately that day  
I knew it that day  
I snuggled toward you and you knew.

It was all poetry  
Remember me as a poet please.

---

### **Grateful**

First there are my ears  
Run my fingers gently along the inside  
Thanking and praising my love of words

Then my sex  
Profusely is the only way  
Next my mother  
Who I hope to hug in heaven.

Thank my beautiful friends  
Thank my good life and my lover  
Strong, bright, smartest  
Blessed life, never a loss

This story came before.

I came to UUCSC via Wicca. My mother, Eleanore Devine, was a UU. When she moved from Chicago, she found and loved the UUCSC group here at the American Legion. I continued in my Dianic Coven for many years. How many women moved through over the years, and how many years? — my friend, another poet, has written somewhere.

In high school in Illinois my teacher-mentor James Marran started a class called the Summer Seminar in Community Affairs. An equal number of White and Black high schoolers — half from the wealthy suburbs, half from Chicago, worked together. We painted gyms, studied red-lining, conducted a housing survey, and had a street fair that turned into a fistfight with Chicago Black neighborhood kids. The Chicago students visited our elegant public school with its proscenium stage of Rock Hudson and Ann-Margret fame, Olympic-size swimming pool and SO much more, the White students' palatial homes and pools. I attended a sleep-over with the daughter of a Black Chicago PD detective. He took us for a ride at night and had us lie on the floor when there was a police incident. My father, a Navy reservist, helped the detective's son join the Navy (Vietnam, thanks)! I held hands with a tall Black poet who lived with his single mom on assistance in one of the projects. He went on to Oberlin for college. The summer seminar helped me get early-admission to Wellesley College in Hillary Rodman's class.

I most want to be remembered as a poet. Still writing poems now with home hospice care.

There are many more words in this talkative Irish/English woman.

In 1969 I was rabble-rousing in New Bedford, with the Regional Action Group. We maintained the war would take mostly black and working class youth to die, and that Ho Chi Minh would be an excellent leader.

We leafleted on Thursday stroll night when stores were open. We got some tough young boys, not crazy about Blacks or women. They began visiting our collective in Fall River, hanging out smoking pot, LSD, stronger drugs. This was uncomfortable for women collective members. Trying to connect to them, a collective couple bought motorcycles and approached other slightly older youth who had fought in Vietnam and were questioning their role. They read our booklets. Many attended Bristol Community College on the GI bill; more got married.

But Hillary Rodman was in New Bedford, too. I cannot confirm what agency she worked with. Her job involved an early Child Find, visiting handicapped and otherwise homebound children in the city and connecting them with doctors and diagnostics and getting them to care.

I was a member of the first [Venceremos Brigade](#) to Havana Province, a service trip. For over two months, 200 of us cut and stacked the sugar cane harvest and toured new school buildings and other sights. The Cubans called us 'progressive young Americans.' We woke to 'Hey Jude' and 'Good Morning, Starshine,' then pro-Castro news radio before heading to hard work in the fields. We worked side by side with Fidel Castro, National Liberation Front soldiers from Vietnam who had a Cuban town renamed Ben Tre for one destroyed by US forces there. Unease among Brigade members from Vietnam Veterans Against the War was thick.

We ate and danced together. My parents in Chicago were visited by the FBI. No, I was not with my community college teacher husband in Fall River, MA. The trouble had just begun.

We had flown to Cuba through Mexico, where my passport was stamped CUBA. We returned to the United States on a cattle boat through Canada. [Marc Rudd](#) of the Weather Underground group showed up and urged us to move 'underground' and fight. A number of Brigadistas disappeared into the woods and clandestinely headed toward the US on foot. I took a bus to Fall River, where my husband picked me up. Our journals and machetes were confiscated and we were offered a future chance to pick them up at the FBI, which I never did. It was a really scary time. We were all tracked home and investigated in great detail.

We soon consolidated, moving most of the group into a roomy house with an attic. I had an attic room; my husband was on the second floor. FBI or Federal Department of Internal Security agents moved right in across the street, taking over a second floor front porch and more space, explaining to the owners how dangerous we were.

We were pretty open about ourselves during this time. We showed NEWSREEL films at the YMCA, and I even had articles in the Fall River Herald News about my experiences in Cuba. We took groups we had organized in the community to anti-war demonstrations in Boston and the other towns south of Boston organized by other old Students for a Democratic Society. I became closer to the Collective's Women's Group, people I know to this day.

[Bobby Seale](#) was gagged by Judge Hoffman after the Weather Underground riot at the Democratic Convention. We wanted to do a large action TDA (the day after) his sentencing.

Our women's group felt strongly about the actions we planned having an adverse effect on single mothers, working mothers, children, and careers. We as women had gained in strength and confidence and even love for one another's situations. How concerned we all were about violence for its own sake, maybe gunfire, who knew? The women were able to call off the March/Riot/Gunfire/Stoning/Injuries.

Although I soon left Fall River with three Brigada Venceremos women, the fight raged on. I bought a Dodge and headed West with three other women. All of a sudden I realized that I was traveling with three anarchists in a car that I had bought to get us out of there. I wondered, what is an anarchist? My new companions had many places to stay, as we traversed the country. We had earnest talks and got sunburned legs in the Grand Canyon.

The crackdown in New England continued. Jobs were all under threat, the House Internal Securities Committee (Once the House Un-American Activities Committee) worked vigilantly to track and follow New Leftists and Black Panthers, the Weather Underground people, Yippies.... House Internal Securities reports appeared as far south as New Jersey. There were our smiling faces; we thought we could save the world!

The story went on for years. When I returned to the Boston area and lived with a Brigadista, the FBI visited her and told her not only that she was in huge trouble, but they knew we were lovers, and that could cause huge troubles for her. This was all before I met my wife, Bea. I have finally found peace in Peace Dale, RI, where I moved in 1978, only knowing one or two people.

Dorothy Devine

Written in short spurts and compiled with assistance from Etta Zasloff.

November 2021 - January 2022



[Fifty Years of Poetry by Dorothy F. Devine](#). Reflections and rants on years in the anti-war, women's, and LGBT movements, with hippie escapades thrown in for spice and a no-nonsense cancer battle.