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Poetry: All forms & styles

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# JANE, BETTY, DORIS

DONNA L. EMERSON



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## JANE, BETTY, DORIS

They gave us all they had.  
Love, rules, hysteria, threats.  
We leaned on them.  
They leaned on each other.  
Three sisters cut from whole cloth,  
good stock, land grant freedom,  
daughters of the American Revolution.  
Each was fed God with whole milk,  
roast beef, powdered toothpaste.  
They never danced nor drank on Sunday  
but Oh those Saturday Nights!  
They learned to laugh in a big farm kitchen  
often prayed on wooden chairs  
especially when brother Harry came home.  
Harry had to live in Bath with other family  
to make ends meet. Or was it punishment  
for hitting a boy at school with the mop?  
Harry told me in his seventies  
how much he hated this move.  
Felt cut off, thrown out, lonely.  
Their animals: horses, dogs, cats, cows,  
their music: piano, saxophone, song,  
then the Depression  
all part of the girls' household,  
potatoes grown on the farm fed them  
before the second war,  
and each thrust from farm and mill town  
to the world's theaters at war, too young.  
Had to learn to walk the bridge  
to the Great Society.  
One through nursing,  
one through hair, one through  
writing, each bearing three children.  
Each married as the walkway out.  
The men, imperfect, brought sorrow.  
Thus they gave us life  
and loss through their own.

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# Donna L. Emerson

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## ABOUT THE WRITER:

DONNA L. EMERSON's publications include *Alembic*, *Avatar Review*, *CQ* (California Quarterly), *CALYX*, *The Chaffin*, *Chicago Quarterly Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Dos Passos Review*, *Eclipse*, *Edison Literary Review*, *El Portal*, *Evening Street Review*, *Existere - Journal of Arts and Literature*, *Fourth River*, *Fox Cry Review*, *Front Range Review*, *Global Youth Review*, *The Griffin*, *Grub Street*, *The Healing Muse*, *Lips*, *The London Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, *The MacGuffin*, *Marin Poetry Anthology*, *The Meadow*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *New Ohio Review*, *Nonconformist Magazine*, *Open Ceilings*, *Paterson Literary Review*, *The Paragon Journal*, *Passager*, *Pennsylvania English*, *Persimmon Tree*, and *Poetry Porch*.

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