

If it is sentimental, it is still the noblest of desires: “A world with kindness/Is where I dream/We will all live/Someday.” Deborah K. Miller’s new volume includes not only, “A Place To Dream” but also many other poems devoted to the praise of kindness, humane thought and action, and love. In fact, apart from some descants on aging and mortality, *One for the Road* may be read all through as a paean to familial love. These are pages to hug the heart.

—Fred Chappell,
Poet Laureate of North Carolina, 1997-2002.
His recent book is *As If It Were* (LSU Press).

These bright and hearty poems make Deborah Kravitz Miller’s *Remnants of Strawberry Blonde* familiar, yet with more shine and bravado. Every syllable settles in real feelings to consume discord and pain. Love lives in the heart of every poem in *One for the Road*.

—Shelby Stephenson,
Poet Laureate of North Carolina, 2015-2018.
His recent book is *Slavery and Freedom on Paul’s Hill* (Press 53).

One
for the
Road



POETRY FOR LIVING

DEBORAH KRAVITZ MILLER
Author of *Remnants of Strawberry Blonde*

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Dedication

This book is lovingly dedicated to family and friends who make the world a kind place, speak for those who have no voice, share their lives without expectation of anything in return, treat people with the dignity they deserve, and work for the greater good of humanity. You know who you are.

Acknowledgments

I'd like to acknowledge my friends who encourage, endure,
and sometimes edit my poetic inclinations. Thank you,
Nancy Martin-Young, Ellen Rose, Sara Anderson,
Dorothy Baird, Sarah Edwards, Ann Hart, Rick Harrison,
Preston Martin, and Laura Johnson.

Thanks to Jo Taylor, friend and teacher whose classes/
workshops (and patience) have made me a better poet
and storyteller.

Thanks to Fred Chappell and Shelby Stephenson,
who walked alongside this poet's conversations of the heart
and understood the journey.

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Best friends and neighbors, the Johnston family in 1959 with Deborah. Pictured here are (L-R) Karl Jay, Konnie, Deborah, and Karen.

Introduction

I grew up in Shallotte, a southern coastal North Carolina town. My mother was from Ash, ten miles inland from Shallotte, and my father was from Brooklyn, New York. My parents believed everyone's life is important. Demonstrations of kindness and compassion were their greatest legacy. I viewed the world through my grandparents' eyes, worked in Dad's furniture store, became a part of a faith community, and had great friends who taught me people are responsible for themselves and should contribute to the greater good of others. Childhood memories formed the backdrop of my adult responses to life's challenges and gave me the opportunity to share these lines with you.

My first book, *Remnants of Strawberry Blonde*, was published in 2013. After one poetry reading, a lady greeted me in a forceful tone, saying, "I did not have the kind of parents and grandparents you had." It was momentarily disconcerting. Then, her voice quieted as she added, "But I can be the kind of grandmother you had." She understood exactly what I tried to get across in my poetry. No matter how our lives appear to others, all of us know love and loss. An attitude of gratefulness changes our view of everyday occurrences, and perhaps another person's life.

One for the Road reveals life lessons through the lens of youth and the perspective of adulthood. Poems span idyllic childhood summer days to the ravages of old age. You'll find laughter, tears, and most of all gratitude for the gift of life and love, the support of family and friends. It is a book best shared with others. These words and your own can create a better understanding of relationships among people. With that, I hope those who follow in our footsteps

lead lives acknowledging the dignity and worth of each individual and live life compassionately.

A poem that calls to our hearts can remind us of a wonderful meal shared together before departing to our next destination. We are forever on a journey; memories coalesce moments our lives touch each other. Perhaps it is that first hello, the experience of empathy, a photograph with friends, a goodbye wave, a favorite verse that sustains our spirits over the years. That is the coming and going, the *one for the road*, that counts the most. Safe travels.