



2019
Poetry Contest
Transitioning Into Retirement

1st Place

Alice W. Sweeney, Garden Way

2nd Place

Jane Cocke Perdue, The Clairmont

3rd Place

Shirley Laundry, The Continental

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MY GOLDEN YEARS

“Fancy clothes and Cadillacs” The fortune cookie said.
Aches and pains and cataracts are what I got instead.
My knees are getting wobbly, and I wake up in a skin
More wrinkled than pajamas that I’d tossed the whole night in.
Everybody mumbles, so I can’t hear what they say.
I’d forget it anyhow. My memory’s gone astray.
But I know God still loves me, and I’ve friends who cheer me on,
So I don’t worry ‘bout the vim and vigor that are gone.
And I still have some body parts that never do get sore.
So I just count my blessings, and then I feel young once more.

Alice W. Sweeney

Garden Way

Parade of Elders

The day arrives quickly – surprising us!
Workplace demands have ended,
sending us into another stage of changes,
gravity pulling us toward a center
like moths circling light.
From places near and far
we come as pioneers of old
searching for a new home.
Arriving with trepidation and hesitation,
greeted by the sight of a grand procession
we stand and watch with fascination—

Steering his power chair
like the tank commander
he was in Viet Nam,
he sits erect,
looking straight ahead,
speeding toward the dining room.

She clutches the handlebars
of her well-worn walker,
her daily life-line,
gently lifting and lowering the frame
in steady rhythm
with each painful step.

He shuffles slowly,
shoes scraping the carpet,
right side leaning toward the wall,
knowing he can balance against it
to avoid a fall.

A wheeled chair rolls slowly
down one corridor,
tenderly and carefully pushed
by a partner
of over fifty years.

Each person in this parade of elders
determined to navigate
the long halls of golden age
from their apartment
to the dining room
to nourish their bodies with good food
and their souls with friendship
and conversation—

We know with the wisdom
of this life phase,
we have found our home
and this parade of elders
will soon become our friends.

Jane Cocke Perdue
The Clairmont

Transitioning Into Retirement

Easing into retirement? It all
goes in stages –
Changing, evolving as each
person ages.

For me it began with excitement
and fun.

As I played with my love in
the Florida sun.

The kids came to visit – then
grandkids – a bonus!

They moved far out west but,
oh well! they'd still phone us.

But as years sped on by it
was harder to travel.

My idyllic existence began to
unravel.

Friends faded away. There were
fewer vacations.

The ER was one of our prime
destinations.

Then one day I awoke and my
dreams were all shattered.

I faced life alone and I felt
nothing mattered.

Yet time eases pain and after
a while.

I went on with my life – even
started to smile.

My days settled into a
pleasant routine.

My home was my castle. I
reigned there as queen.

I gladly flew westward for
special occasions –

Weddings and birthdays – no
missed celebrations.

Not even my 90th! Yikes!

Could this be true?

What I really that old? Now
what should I do?

My far away family was
worried and so

I decided t'was time just
to pack up and go.

So now I'm in Texas with
family at hand
Trying retirement home living
and so far it's grand.
The staff here is gracious. I
like my new pad.
Most people are friendly. The
food isn't bad.
So I thank the dear Lord for
this thrilling new chapter

In my quest to seek life
happily ever after.

Shirley Laundry
The Continental

Our Retirement Life

Our retirement life was
topped when we moved to
Brook Ridge in two thousand
eighteen, there we
discovered our apartment
so pretty and clean.

The balcony outside our
window is so inviting.

Palm trees and landscape
are so refreshing.

Welcome to our dining
room, so beautiful and serene.

We love the staff
and all the amenities.

All this make our lives so comfortable
and serene.

Dale Cleveland

Brook Ridge

Retirement?

That retirement nonsense just must go,
The status quo is fine you know.

My years of wisdom should suffice
To tell you it's a poor device.

To halt my service to the world,
And find a replacement, that's absurd!

What's that? I have no choice you say,
And I must retire, and you name the day.

After all the years of working together,
My team will surely tell them "never!"

But my team is kindly letting me know,
That retirement is a gift of time bestowed.

And that very soon they all will be,
Placed for retirement just like me.

Jean Kirkpatrick
Waterford Terrace

It's Not Your Grandma's Bingo Anymore...

...it's great to have no responsibilities...

...it's true – grandkids are great on Saturdays– and then they go home...

...not everyone plays Bingo 'cause they're old – it's not your grandma's bingo anymore – you would be surprised who is at bingo – yes, there are men at bingo – ok, count me in! – there are all kinds of people at bingo these days - the ladies are not too happy when the men win! – they can play just not win!...

...you can travel – where haven't we been is a better question – drop me off in Italy...

...speaking of work – miss the 'gossip' and seeing and being with co-workers but not the work! – it's not the same getting together with co-workers after you have left – you don't have things you can talk about like you did before...

...getting to do the things you've always wanted – and still haven't done! - but someday it could still happen!...

...making new friends...and men friends...

...going out to eat - a lot! – Senior discounts are great! and most places have a senior menu – the breadsticks at Olive Garden are the best – always order more to take home – they're free...

...being able to do absolutely nothing!...

...sometimes it can be quiet but at the end of the day –

We wouldn't trade retirement for anything!

By Betty Z., Roxanne H., & Ruth Ma.

The Haven at North Hills

EARLY RETIREMENT

Our redhead, full of promise,
Flew the nest for FSU.
Anticipation followed;
Just how would our fledgling do?

She spoke not of her courses,
But to younger brother snapped,
“T am brighter far, than you;
With honors, I’ll be capped.”

She claimed dorm housing awful,
So we quickly packed and drove.
Our own dorms were not as nice,
Classy drapes, a brand new stove.

The walls were freshly painted
And the lighting bright and fine.
A lush green lawn surrounded,
Where stood stately Oak and Pine.

We scratched our heads in wonder;
Just what more could one desire?
Then one corner caught our eye;
Still yet...a cozy fire.

In time we found her taking
But one class each semester;
Holding her degree in hand
Meant real life soon would test her.

She crossed the stage with honors
As her parents filled with glee;
Fingers tightly wrapped around
The long coveted degree.

Our family celebrated,
Though the graduate seemed glum,
As if a smile would kill her,
She but wanted home to come.

Our couch, her best friend soon became
As she lounged across its frame,
Sometimes stretching like her cat,
Shrugging off "The working game."

Employment forms, her friend brought,
Just for her to think about;
The second that each friend left
She would rip and throw them out.

Friends were swiftly landing jobs;

I asked if that inspired...

“All required of me, I’ve done,

And NOW MOM, I’M RETIRED!!!”

Joyful I. Waszink

Summerfield Estates

Don't Play Dead Until You Die

When people begin to get a little old,
There is always a story to be told.

You look into their eyes and wonder,
Where they've been and what's asunder.

If they could only see the reason why,
They shouldn't play dead until they die.

Years have passed and since gone by,
Until you breathe your very last sigh.

Wanda Chastain
Country Club Village

Pajamas and no make-up

Pajamas and no make-up,
No body to say “Wake-up.”
Hair a mess, but feel so blessed.
Plenty of time to think of a guest.
Movie or shopping, no cleaning or mopping.
Jeans and a sweat shirt
No problems with my own quirks.
Plenty of gas to go have a blast.
No selling houses using note book & bank scores.
Don’t have to worry about those anymore.
Retirement can’t be as much fun as that
But it’s finally here – I think I’ll go take a nap.

Frances Tomlinson

The Continental

ME AND MAMA

ME AND MAMA we've been talkin' for a long time,
'Bout the places and the things we'd like to see.
We always thought that it was wishful thinkin',
And we'd spend our lives right here at four-oh-three.

But yesterday we settled up the mortgage,
The kids have all growed up and gone away.
The crab grass on the lawn can go to blazes,
ME AND MAMA gonna have ourselves a day.

ME AND MAMA we've been through a lot together,
Through the lean years she was always at my side,
And now with all the hard times way behind us,
ME AND MAMA gonna take ourselves a ride.

Maybe we'll go south to Arizona,
The desert air they say is mighty fine.
We might decide to spend a night in Vegas,
ME AND MAMA gonna have ourselves a time.

There was times when we both wondered if we'd make it,
But we kept each other goin' through it all,
And now I guess you'd say it's downhill all the way,
ME AND MAMA gonna have ourselves a ball.

Larry Matson
Garden Way

THE LAST STOP

It has been a long, long haul, had some laughs and some sorrows,

Days and days packed with routine and plans for our tomorrows.

Off every day to make a few bucks, to pay the bills of life,

Back home at night to the family, the kids and a wonderful wife.

'O', yes, we've had a lot of fun but time has slowly slipped away.

The kids are gone now and we don't need all these chores every day.

We worked all those years to keep body and soul together,

But now it's time to head south and join our many friends of a feather.

No more getting up early, fightin traffic, always ruled by a schedule,

We have earned the right to lay back, take a nap, and play bean bag baseball,

We can grab a bag of popcorn, settle down to watch the big movie screen

Or catch the Retirement bus and go watch the Ducks team.

Life is really winding down and joy is fading out,

We are beginning to forget where we were headin, even what we were about.

This old body is getting ready to cash in its chips

The game is almost over. This home will be the last one of our great trips.

Melmuth D. McKay

Garden Way

Josie the Cat

There once was a cat named Josie,
Who, like most cats, was nosy.
“Don’t shut that door!
want to explore.
Or down the hall to mosey.”

Her breed was Russian Blue.
Her fur a dark grey hue.
Full name, Josephina.
A feline Tsarina.
Her subjects knew ‘twas true.

She seldom said “Meow”.
‘Twas more likely a “Now!”
“Pet me! Feed me!
Groom me! Heed me!
Or I’ll have a cow!”

Sometimes she was like a dog,
Daily tummy rubs to log.
She’d chase her tail,
Her toys assail,
Then nap, the sunshine to hog.

When we returned one day,
Her excitement was on display.
A lizard in place
Had invaded her space.
Now dead on the floor did lay.

At dawn she began to chime.
But really, it was a crime.
Four-legged alarm
Our sleep did harm.
Too bad she couldn't tell time!

Estelle Voelker
Waterford Terrace

Retiring

It's not a hotel, it's a community
End-of-life place to go to share
Not a hotel but a friendly kind of unity
A sunshine space to learn to care

Yellow serviettes, fancy, china cups
We can sit in any empty place
I wobble over, trying not to fall
Fascinated by man with head-like-ball
Where I join sweet lady with elfin face

She jumps up going to get me coffee
Smile on his face, I pull out a stool
"ABBA calls me 'SNL', but Sam's just fine,"
"Saturday Night Live?" you the funny man?
Laughing, "Stupid, Not Likely." ABBA doesn't like the fool

ABBA is taking an inordinately long time
Sam frowns, following the direction of my gaze
Few people waiting for fresh, **Decaf** coffee
In the line for **Regular**, I count to twenty-three
Line loops around walkers, power chairs and makes an old-age maze

“Has domineering daughter wants ABBA drink only decaf
When ABBA turned 100, daughter’s gift; jump rope, “
“Pray tell”, but Sam skirts the slippery slope
Says ABBA fond name used even by the staff
Joins us with walker, 3 cups and a flask
To drink Decaf makes daughter right,
Far more steady on her feet than I at seventy-eight
Sam says, “Daughter insists calling her Gertrude!”
“Of course, ABBA stands for Grandmother?” I ask
“No, ABBA stands for Ancient, Bold B*h, with Attitude!”**

Not a hotel, it’s an immunity
End-of-life place for just a little while
Not a hotel but a fabulous community
A Sunshine Place where we learn to smile

Lynn Verhoeff

The Clairmont

A Place for Dad

June has its moments.

Days have its weeks.

Life has its low points,

But also its peaks.

The body has its zeniths.

When strength seems to flow,

But the springtime of youth

Eventually turns to the winter of slow.

A body that once jumped and danced

that stood straight and tall,

Now bends at the waist and leans forward

As if threatening to suddenly fall.

Dads hair that was black

Begins turning white,

And not long after takes flight.

Dad needs a change of lifestyle

Was the opinion the family expressed,

That will provide him better care

And lessen his obvious distress.

*Austin, Texas appeared to be the best place
For Dad to find the assistance he needed.
And The Continental Retirement Community
Was just the place the family conceded.*

*With superior location near medical services.
He was thrilled to see would be getting.
And with its exciting offerings of activities and games,
And smiling friends to complete the setting.*

*Doctors and hospitals were close at hand.
Shopping offerings that were very near.
With church services and entertainment, a desired option.
I could remain active throughout the year.*

*The fact that his daughter lived very close,
Offered him help for which he was glad.
When all these factors were added up
We knew for truth this was the place for Dad*

Wendell Sharpton

The Continental

Sunshine Retirement Living Communities 2019



ARKANSAS

Hot Springs

- Country Club Village

CALIFORNIA

Antioch

- Quail Lodge

Chula Vista

- Canterbury Court

Folsom

- Creekside Oaks

La Mesa

- Waterford Terrace

Novato

- Deer Park

FLORIDA

Lehigh Acres

- Fountain Crest

Tallahassee

- Azalea Gardens

GEORGIA

Dallas

- Creekside Pines

Dunwoody

- Dunwoody Pines

Evans

- Marshall Pines

Sandy Springs

- Hammond Glen

INDIANA

Mishawaka

- Heritage Point

LOUISIANA

Lake Charles

- The Verandah

New Orleans

- Landing at Behrman Place

NEVADA

Reno

- Stone Valley

OHIO

Beachwood

- Windsor Heights

OREGON

Bend

- ★ Community Support Office

Eugene

- Garden Way

Tigard

- Summerfield Estates

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

- The Haven at North Hills

TEXAS

Austin

- The Clairmont
- The Continental

Pharr

- Brook Ridge
- The Gardens At Brook Ridge

COMING SOON:

CALIFORNIA

Fountain Valley

- Park View
Opening Spring 2020

MASSACHUSETTS

Methuen

- The Woods At Merrimack
Opening Fall 2019

SOUTH CAROLINA

Greenville

- Maple Brook Terrace
Opening Spring 2020