

Somewhere between  
the dream life predicted  
in our high school yearbooks  
and now, lies the Path  
we actually walked:

# This Path

A Silver Boomer Book

Editors:

Ginny Greene

Becky Haigler

Kerin Riley-Bishop

Barbara B. Rollins

Silver Boomer Books

Abilene Texas

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*Dedication*

*to all the lantern holders and  
trail markers who helped us  
make our way*

*with particular appreciation  
to the fellowship of  
Abilene Writers Guild,  
and in tribute to founder  
Juanita Daniel Zachry,  
April 6, 1917 - July 29, 2008*

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## *Other Silver Boomer Books*

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*a collection of prose and poetry  
by and about baby boomers  
March, 2008*

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*July, 2008*

### *Eagle Wings Press Imprint*

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by Laura Flett*

### *Slender Steps to Sanity:*

*Biblical Notes of Hope by a Compulsive  
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*We look back  
on paths  
we walked...*

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## *Paths*

*Barbara B. Rollins*

A hundred years of nights and days  
since Robert Frost surveyed two paths,  
while time careened through history's maze  
and culture burst with heat that crazed  
the china mores of the past.

A simple time, a wooded place,  
within, without, choose this or that.  
New England's order, peace and grace  
mock Texas plains where rocks replace  
leaf-covered ways with vast grass mat.

Nothing stands to block my way;  
a hundred paths each step could birth.  
I long for order – yea or nay —  
as choices wail to have their say  
and force a measure of their worth.

Would Frost concede the challenge worse  
or scorn the shallow weight I give,  
my literal reading of his verse?  
I'll never know. We can't reverse  
time's path but each the now will live.

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## *Prodigal*

*Becky Haigler*

Why do we not value  
what is most abundant,  
most needful? No tax on air?  
No levy on sunshine?  
My father's love was so free  
I thought it worthless.

But when purchased pleasures failed  
I sought the coin of his favor,  
the currency of his covering.  
So I came, muddy  
and smelling of pigs' dung,  
and my father embraced me.

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## *Boundaries*

*Lynn Pinkerton*

Keeping pace with the slow rhythm of hot, southern days, rivers of sweat meandered down my young, naïve body. It was on a day in August of 1965 that I trudged the walkway through tall sheltering pines to my next class. Marooned in a small college town in deep East Texas, days were filled with summer school classes, welcome trips to the local Dairy Queen, and cool nights with friends piled into my blue-and-white '55 Ford looking for boys and diversion at the town's only drive-in movie. It was the summer the Beach Boys happily crooned about "California Girls," while we slept soundly in unlocked dorm rooms. Little of importance existed outside this sphere of security and comfort.

My routine trip to class was sharply interrupted by a friend who excitedly announced that "Black Power had gone crazy in California." He went on to explain that he had heard on the radio that wild bands of Negroes were burning down Los Angeles, and white people everywhere were worried their city would be next. I had never heard of a place called Watts and could not imagine what could upset people enough to burn down their own neighborhood. I mustered up a dutiful amount of shock and concern, made a mental note that I needed to buy new eyeliner and hurried off to class.

In the days to follow, fragments of the drama unfolding 1,500 miles away pricked the safety net of my small world. With one

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TV set in the dorm living room, only three television networks, a payphone down the hall, a city newspaper the size of a large greeting card, and local radio stations more captivated by the daily Farm Report than national news, outside information was slow to come.

It was the first time I remember hearing the word “riot.” The echo of Martin Luther King’s appeal for non-violence was drowned out on the streets of Watts by angry cries of “Burn, Baby, Burn.” Generations of simmering racial hopelessness and frustration boiled over into raging fires, looting, violence and bloodshed. Fourteen hundred National Guardsmen and fifteen hundred police finally restored a fragile peace. Dawn of the sixth day revealed that much of this segregated Los Angeles neighborhood lay stunned in still-smoking, charred, black rubble. Thirty-four people were dead, one thousand injured, four thousand arrested and \$35 million worth of damage had been inflicted on neighborhood homes, shops, cars and cafes.

Unfamiliar, distant reality poked at the boundaries of my cozy cocoon, as my middle-class white friends and I sat around the dorm eating popcorn, playing Beatles records and trying to sort it all out. For the most part, we were well-intentioned in our efforts to reach out and understand the despair and dreams of our far-away neighbors. But exams were coming up and there was also no Internet; no email, blogs, YouTube, i-reports; no cell phones or twenty-four-hour news sources. We remained an island surrounded by narcissistic collegiate life, disconnected from what was happening across town and across the country.

Looking back at the Sixties several decades later, I am astonished at how I rambled through college relatively unaware of the breaking news continuously happening around my country. While I grooved to the sounds of “Hang on, Sloopy” and flipped hopefully through *Bride’s Magazine*, humans left first-time footprints on the faraway moon, Timothy Leary

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powered up the “psychedelic sixties,” the sexual revolution roared to life, women flung off their bras and aprons and demanded more from life, four hundred thousand tie-dyed hippies gathered on a rural New York farm for a legend-in-the-making called Woodstock, the anguish of the Vietnam War was shouted from flag-draped caskets and burning draft cards, Camelot was gunned down and The Great Society born.

I rode the white line right down the middle of this exciting, historic phenomenon of radical social and political revolution and did not know I had been there. Like the Watts summer rioters, I lived segregated and apart, isolated by invisible boundaries of youthful self interest and small-town myopia. Only later did the quiet riots of time and perspective bring my global village into sharper focus.

## *Predator of Forever*

*Carl L. Williams*

Time is ever hungry and kills to eat,  
mauling the hours and savaging the days,  
swallowing whole the tender portions,  
yet chewing slowly on the gristle,  
licking up the seconds like the flow of blood,  
consuming lives and dreams and memories,  
while tracking the ages with ravenous intent,  
devouring decades without mercy,  
and feeding on eternity, insatiate.

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## *The Road*

*Lynn Pinkerton*

Her fresh footsteps  
innocently wiggle forward  
gambling  
on the imaginary road ahead.

Early days of  
original promise  
stretching  
out in benevolent possibility.

Small hands  
chase flickering fireflies  
dodging  
frozen moments in glass prisons.

Time topples into  
pimples and proms  
teetering  
on fleeting feet of change.

Tender days  
of budding vision  
flaunting  
virgin skin and saluting breasts.

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Birthdays repeat  
like rapid-firing guns  
drilling  
holes in plans and plots.

Dimming dawn unfurls  
billowing skirts  
revealing  
sagging sunsets and graying finales.

Undaunted, her wrinkled hopes  
gobble up change, still  
gambling  
on the imaginary road ahead.

## *Silver Breeze*

*Ginny Greene*

Watching that woman  
wearing grey  
around her temples  
Looking back at an empty nest  
throwing off shackles and  
charging down a new road  
Cheers to the woman  
roaring past gray  
and on beyond purple

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*security**Becky Haigler*

crisp uniform, jacket  
with official patches  
tall, folded into  
rolling desk chair  
phone pressed to  
lined face awkwardly  
maybe a hunter, tanned  
but not work-burned  
thinning gray, neatly trimmed  
brushy mustache, comfortable  
no weapon, this job is  
a bird nest on the ground

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