

GROWING PAINS

GROWING PAINS

Love Poems for The Planet's Young & Aging Partners

IAN CARRUTHERS

Published 2025
by Ian Carruthers

ISBN 978-0-473-76232-2

© Copyright Ian Carruthers 2025

All rights reserved.

Except for the purpose of fair reviewing, no part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

COPYPRESS

Printed by CopyPress, Nelson, New Zealand.

{REALNZBOOKS}

Distributed by Real NZ Books, Nelson, New Zealand.

www.copypress.co.nz

All those memories, lost in time, like tears in the rain.
Time to die ...

RIDLEY SCOTT DIR., *BLADERUNNER*, 1982,
ROY BATY'S LAST MOMENTS

Gilgamesh, who once supposedly erected Uruk's walls
and much more, would be happy to learn that he has
achieved the only kind of immortality allowed to mere
mortals: he is remembered.

MOUDHY AL-RASHID, *BETWEEN TWO RIVERS: ANCIENT
MESOPOTAMIA AND THE BIRTH OF HISTORY*, 2025

IN MEMORIAM

Eguchi Kazuko

(River Mouth Peace Child)

9 July 1946 – 11 February 2022

and

Miss Richards

Form 1 teacher, Ravenswood School (d. of cancer, 1954),
who taught me how to Read & Write in 1953

CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	x
Preface	xiii
Introduction, by Dr. Jackie Cook	xv
Acknowledgements	xvi

Poetic periods of Growing Pains:

I (1970–8). Education: Poetry of Failure	1
II (1978–2014). Professional life: No Time for Poetry	11
III (2015–22). Retirement: Poetry for Kazuko	15
IV (2022–25). Bereavement: Elegies for Kazuko	125

In Her Own Words:

Dawn-coloured Flower Vase	175
Another Glass	179

Back Story: Kazuko Eguchi	183
----------------------------------	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

May be found by page, date or photo number.

Kazuko's water-colour self-portrait, Kansai, c. 1970s	Front Cover
Photo of Kazuko at <i>Ryokan Kimi</i> , Tokyo, 1996	Inside Front Cover
(see also poem <i>Quiet Time</i> , 3 February, 2024)	Page 160
Ian and Kazuko wedding photo, 1994	Page xiv

Nine Poems relating to Kazuko's Glass:

The poem <i>Growth</i> (9 April, 2017)	Page 40
relates to Kazuko's <i>Determination</i> (1984), discussed in	
BackStory: <i>Kazuko Eguchi</i>	Photo 8
The poem <i>Still Life in a Green Glass Vase</i> (10 June, 2018)	Page 62
relates to Kazuko's <i>Wajima</i> -style Striped-Brown Vase	Photos 21–22
The poem <i>Two Swallows, Two Homes</i> (23 November, 2020)	Page 101
compares Kazuko's <i>Breeze, A Beautiful Morning</i> and <i>Melancholy</i>	
(made in Japan, 1978, 1980–81)	Photos 5–7
with <i>Expectation</i> and <i>Scene 100</i> (made in Australia, 1992 and 1994).	
BackStory	Photos 9 and Inside Back Cover
The poem <i>Two Glass Paintings</i> (8 June, 2022)	Page 134
relates to Kazuko's <i>Captured Moment 1 and 2</i>	
given to Lindsay Anderson, 2004.	Photo 23 and Back Cover
The poem <i>Compass Points</i> (16 June, 2022)	Page 136
relates to my crayon sketch for Kazuko in hospital	Photo 24

The poem <i>Kazuko's Scene 100: Ghost Trees</i> (3 April, 2023)	Page 145
relates to her diptych <i>Scene 100</i>	Photo 20 and Inside Back Cover
The poems <i>Kazuko's Kaze</i> (24 October, 2023)	Page 155
and <i>Perfect Storm</i> (7 November, 2023)	Page 156
relate to her glass hat <i>Breeze (Kaze)</i> , 1978	Photo 5
The poem <i>Second Anniversary of K's death</i> (2 January, 2024)	Page 159
relates to her glass panel <i>Expectation</i> , 1992	Photo 9
The poem <i>Quiet Time</i> (3 February, 2024)	Page 160
refers to her portrait photograph	Inside Front Cover
All the Photo Illustrations of Kazuko's Glass found at the end of BackStory: <i>Kazuko Eguchi</i> help explain the deep connections between her Life and Art.	Photos 1–25
Kazuko's diptych <i>Scene 100</i>	Inside Back Cover
See also the poem <i>Kazuko's Scene 100</i> (3 April, 2023)	Page 145
Kazuko's <i>Captured Moments 1 and 2</i>	in Photo 23 and Back Cover
See also the poem <i>Captured Moments</i> , (8 June, 2022)	Page 134
See also the poem <i>Compass Points</i> (16 June, 2022)	Page 136

PREFACE

In fulfilment of a deathbed promise, this book is, as its title suggests, multi-themed. Growth, life, decline and death in the natural, human and artistic worlds are endured/celebrated through love. Initially written to entertain my wheelchair-bound partner Kazuko during our last days in Japan, the poems explore the cycle of the seasons in a Japanese depopulated village during Covid, and thus are a kind of poetic diary. Hence the dates beside the titles are a way of reminding readers that this is Japan, where *waka*, *haiku* and *renga* are closely tied to the seasons.

The promise made to my wife, who had made a name for herself as a glass artist, both in Japan and Australia, was that I would search for an Art Museum or Gallery that would accept her Home Collection of her favourite glass pieces. Thankfully, the Hamilton Gallery in Victoria, Australia and the Notojima Glass Art Museum in Ishikawa, Japan both put up their hands.

After Kazuko's death from a lingering hospital leg infection during Covid, I emigrated to Nelson, New Zealand and continued to remember her through a series of elegiac nature-walks at Tahunanui Beach, Marsden Valley, Motueka Spit and Monaco. The annual migration of the remarkable Godwits of Golden Bay, which fly non-stop between Alaska and New Zealand, and, on their return journey, overfly Japan, aided remembrance too. I then started to write poems about some of her most interesting glass pieces in preparation for a travelling Retrospective Exhibition organised by her Curator at The Hamilton Gallery, Dr. Bronwyn Hughes, President of The Australian Glass Art Society. The proceeds from the sale of this book will help fund this exhibition.

Just before she died, Kazuko asked me to help her translate two of her published Japanese essays on glass-making. This, I suspect, was so that she could speak "In Her Own Voice" in the Poetry Collection she knew I was also planning to put together for her. In telling her Back Story at the end

of this Collection, I have also tried to round-out the picture by explaining something of the vital relationship between her Life and her Art.

I hope this Collection will appeal to those who love a complex story, Art and/or foreign travel; those who cherish our increasingly endangered Environment; and especially those growing old with a much-loved but ailing Partner with whom one can still find enjoyment in the complex wonders of Planetary life. In the end, we must all accept and embrace the reality of our mortality.

Lastly, to balance-out the ups and downs of this life, I have added a few poems about my own early growth-pains to indicate the sensibility-shift from Youthful despair to a more positive, mature outlook on Life Partnerships.

Ian Carruthers, July 2025



INTRODUCTION

Dr. Jackie Cook

There can be few challenges to the writer as demanding as representing love, and grief, together; elegy representing the memory of a living relationship, and its shared decline through illness into oblivion.

Add to that the negotiation of lives across two cultures, and evoked through two languages—and the capture of not one but two aesthetics in play: the visual codings of Kazuko Eguchi as she pursues an international glass-making career, and Ian Carruthers himself, responding imaginatively as he records the creative productivity of them both.

The writing in this collection, and not least its careful selection and sequencing, play in shimmering detail across these multiple levels. The poems choose with an unerring eye the apt detail, while an acute analysis lets that detail carry an analytic, interpretative load, guiding the reader into the core of not one but two emotional lives. Never shying from the difficulty of it all: the distress as it arises; the failures as well as the instances of triumph, this collection admits us to the intensity and the endurance of love, up to and beyond death, for much lives on, and nothing stops neatly, with the last breath, or the failing pulse. With a self-effacing and always self-critical air, the writer builds around his poems something of his own awe at the privilege of being a part of this shared life, and also the daring of Kazuko, in forcing a new and original path through cultural expectations, to achieve an industrial and then artistic prominence she may never have expected.

The work combines a roundedness in image and felt response, and an acute analytical emphasis. What one poem calls a voyage ‘to open sesame/to reach epiphany’, draws us, too, into this fusion of vision, and so fully inside moments from an intense dual life. As we co-‘voyage’ through these words and images—a term which vibrates between ‘voyage/ voyeur/age’—we are left aware of how a memoir can bring back to life, however temporarily, what is gone forever.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to all the members of the Nelson Library STEM writing group for lively readings and discussions over the past two years, particularly Lorelle Baxter, Jackie Cook, John DuFour, Gaelynnne Pound, and Sandy Stephens who voluntarily took on the time-consuming job of reading my original 200-page typescript and offered thoughtful advice about how I could cut and improve it!

But my greatest debt of all is to our founder and group leader, Dr. Jackie Cook, for her much valued criticisms couched in invariably astute, entertaining and diplomatic language!

Thanks also to John Conly for the original photo settings of Kazuko's Back Story (now in the Hamilton Gallery Kazuko Eguchi Files) and to Greg McKay at The Gallery, Nelson for digitising Front and Back Cover photos.

At CopyPress, many thanks to Suzanne North for design and layout; in many ways, she has improved on my ideas. Thanks also to Alan Bridgland for guidance every step of the way.

Any mistakes I have made herein are entirely my own.

GROWING PAINS I

(1970–78)

EDUCATION

Early Poetry of Failures

The Pattern of the Dance

Thursday 12 December 2024

Why do I resist retelling flatfoot stories?

I don't really know.

Maybe because all friends resist a snitch

and I don't want to show

That I tell nasty fibs and make my pitch

by rattling others' windows.

Patterns that repeat, and change

and sometimes chime,

Are all I'm really after, over time,

to keep me on my dancing feet.

It's to the Scottish reels

I love to go.

In them

I really lost

My heart—when I said No!

At St. Mary's Holiday Home near Lyme Regis, Dorset, in the early 60s, my Christmas dance partner Ali and I were too young and shy to kiss. We just enjoyed touching hands and letting go, touching and flinging go hands and waists and legs and thighs. Laughing it off, kicking up heels in partnered reels' full-on patterned surprise. Back at boarding school, she read aloud my passionate letters proudly to her giggling dorm. And when she told me that she had, I stopped my scribbling, mortified and mad. Betrayal of our childish secrets made me feel so nakedly embarrassed. That made confessional revelation mortifying too to her young Catholic eyes and so she turned right round to *Opus Dei* (so her younger sister Didi said. Didi called it *Anus Dei* in disgust). Alas! Being the eldest is never easy. First makes all the worst mistakes. Years later, coming home from Canada, I suspected *she* was the young nun, hooded up, insisting she would help me carry—to my acute

embarrassment again—my heavy holiday suitcase from the subway to my Cousin Caterpillar’s rental Surrey share-house, half a mile away. Yet another Station of the Cross. With lasting regret, I wonder now, in 2025, just when the Old Eve reasserted: Ali making up for time and Paradise Lost?

Boston, 1970

Blue cornflowers off the side of the road

The height of misery

To Junko, 1978

Junko Maetani, married 1970, divorced 1978

Alas!

You break my bones with your love.

All that I have is yours

And all that You have is yours.

My heart pumping

You smash my bones with the hammer of your tongue

So my marrow spurts out with your saliva.

I'm too bitter.

You tear out my eyes

So I can see better.

You tear tendon from nerve

And socket to make me feel.

You tug my heartstrings till they sob

At their deepest, most stubborn roots, "Me! Me!"

Emmanuelle Woman, is there another word?*

* *Emmanuelle*: Sylvie Kristel film