

Poems about our Seabeck Retreat



The Mask

Lennie Neal, TCF, Victoria, BC

There's an old mask I wear for the public,
Smiling face, I'm sure you've seen the act.
Concealing all the grief so deep and wild,
The deep and desperate longing for my child,
Buried under courtesy and tact.

An invitation brought me to Seabeck
Hesitantly, hoping for some peace.
Walking slowly, shy among the strangers
Mask in place, alert for hidden dangers,
Hoping against hope for some release.

A fortunate seating at the table,
I sat beside a woman, calm and mild.
She turned to greet me with a gaze so fine,
Compassionate eyes that never left mine
As she smiled, and asked about my child.

The wave of relief fairly shook me,
I saw at once that I could drop the mask.
The workshops and the sharings all were real,
Emotions in the songs that made me feel,
The meals also, all that I could ask.

Candles in the night, so very moving,
We gathered on the bridge under the moon.
Couldn't stop the flood of tears from
streaming,
Can't mistake the song, or miss its meaning,
Our children all were taken far too soon.

Our burdens were all burned at the closing,
Cascades of bubbles floating far and near.
The sense of community was stronger,
But we just couldn't stay any longer,
That's OK, we'll all come back next year. ♥



SEABECK

Bob Baugher, Professional Advisor, TCF Seattle-King County

They came from many places
Kent, Kamloops, Kirkland,
Seattle, Seatac, Snohomish,
Vancouver, Vashon, Victoria

Carrying with them pain, grief, hope
They walked, talked, cried, and collaged
Ate, laughed, hugged
Listened to speakers
And shared their own stories

These folks from many places
Met to share a weekend in June
And on Sunday return to the outside world
A world that asks, "Why did you go to Seabeck?"
"Aren't you better yet?"

The world out there never will quite understand
Why people in grief would drive so far
To cross a bridge
To be with others who have lost so much

But long ago a very wise woman said it well
She stated what grief really is
And her words brought it all together
"Grief" she said
"is unfinished love."

