

Poetry Series

**Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele**  
**- poems -**

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## Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele(April 4th,1953)

Retired FEMA inspector, environmentalist, activist, Unitarian Universalist, special education teacher and poet, lives and writes in Montgomery, Alabama. I have attended workshops with Franz Wright in Provincetown, MA in Oct.2005 and with Robert Pinsky in Camden, NJ at Rutgers in 2005. I am published in Write On, Poetic Hours, Penwood Review, Down in the Dirt, Distinguished Writings, Bell's Letters, Alabama Anthology 2006 and Alabama Poet's Society 2006. I have a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Penn State University and a Masters in Education from Alabama State University.

# A Little Blue Shell

A fragile robin's egg lies in my path, unbroken

about forty-five feet below it's mother's nest.

Stepping over the unseen fetus, the first rays

of dawn reflected it's tranquil blue, cooler than

the required mother's 104 degree feathered belly.

No more than fourteen short days before escape

from that hollow inside to inevitable blue skies.

Then, there must be feedings every fifteen minutes.

Impossible to even contemplate.

Now late for my classroom full of disabled

children, also demanding attention, slowly learning

their way out, I hurry along surprised

to find my palm cradling a tiny blue shell.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## A Tree (First Poem Written - Age 8)

Oh, how lovely is a tree  
so much taller, than you or me.  
Spreading out it's branches day and night  
for tired birds, from their flight.

Where would we be without a tree?  
We wouldn't have much, would we?

Born: Cheryl Lynn Safko (St. Petersburg, FLA)

Question: Did I show any literary promise?

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Another Kind Of Love

Bertha, or Millie, or Evie,  
I never knew her name,  
but when my mother's  
scrawny white body  
never produced milk,  
a soft black fountain  
of creamy life giving  
juices poured into me  
from my nanny, who  
was nursing an infant  
of her own. From this  
brown earthy breast  
I bonded with the real  
south - as a world full  
of dark, warm, deep,  
nourishing love

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Any Other Name

A charred piece of bread doesn't care  
if it is given the name of "toast."  
Neither does a bird pause its song  
to see itself properly identified  
in little Darwinian field books. A flower  
will open to the sun, unseen by human eyes.  
A man, however, whose particular scent  
and soul are not memorable, wilts,  
decomposing cell by cell, the  
divine fire smothered out.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Be Quiet Please

Silence sings, if you listen.

Warning....  
earthly frequencies  
can be detrimental  
to your health.

A deaf girl says she  
talks to angels in the cracks  
of a wall. Voiceless spirits  
calm her.

The twisted spine of a boy  
liberates him. He flows away  
from the unbearable here,  
returning pain-free.

Let go of what you know.  
Turn off your bleeping radio!

Your mother was right!  
Loud music can steal  
your soul from the heavens,

where starry silences speak  
to inner ears.

(Published - 'Immortal Verses' - Fall 2007)

Also Accepted - 'Little Black Book of Poetry' - Spring 2008

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Chicken

A child's ear on the track listening  
to low vibrations first. Slight fear  
and trepidations hum.

Ensuing rumblings echo within  
the stomach lining, sending  
warnings to the brain stem.

'Move' echoes throughout  
the nerves. Premonitions  
create a sense of pending doom.

And still you lie, wanting  
the chills racing up and down  
the spine, adrenaline rushing.

As the ground eventually shakes  
your body begins to scream  
with life forces surging.

'Jump' is now a prayer  
whispered by the lush green  
grass and your unborn

children watching, weeping.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Don't Tell Me Your Dreams

"Don't tell me your dreams  
until after the sun comes up, "  
he'd say. But the light won't change  
that he's a black Man and I  
am a white woman in Alabama.  
Daylight, and truth don't matter.  
So we learned to touch only  
with our eyes and our words.  
Knowing no job is tenured  
against bigotry, it finds its way.  
So, here after dark, I dream,  
and wait for unrelenting dawns.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Dream Pockets

Awakened in haste,  
I threw my cotton sheets  
into random creases, capturing  
my startled dreams.

Later, in the dark cool  
stillness I unfolded  
that dream soaked sheet.

Each previous tale  
of slumber flew  
through me, piercing  
my silent core.

Naturally, my daily events  
and nightly visions unite,  
Astaire and Rogers  
twirling in the twilight.

So then, dear conscience  
where is day  
and when is night?

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Eye Sand

Our bodies must produce sand  
to block our sight  
opening our senses  
to the unembodied  
shifting sands within.  
The other senses remain  
interchanging positions.

I can taste a Mama Cass song.  
Smell the sun erasing its light.  
Feel the overwhelming  
orange blossom's breath.  
Watch time dancing again.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Fear Not

Once again Einstein rules  
the universe, this time  
his 'dark energy' viewed  
through Hubble's eyes  
expanding galaxies

laughing at gravity  
moving celestial matter  
expo-nentially, look out  
nothing will collide, neither  
planets, nor our stars

can hesitate, space  
wrinkles invisible, unfelt  
thundering senseless  
skies into once nowhere

now arriving daily  
to a reality near you.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## For Bill Kanouse

In your name I leave  
the refrigerator half empty.  
Fresh air blows through windows  
resorting partially written  
pieces of my days.

Swimming in clear water  
can be difficult, so I must  
lay in the rain, soaking up  
what remains of  
unspoken truths.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# From The Inside Out – An Autistic View

The autistic child's fingers fly across  
the keys releasing inaudible syllables  
of joy, floating upward between  
his fingers.

He tilts his head slightly  
to catch the reflection of the lyrical words,  
melting into his ears, secretly  
soft bubbles.

My round teacher lips release  
a question, "sing, sing, sing" repeated  
in his head, an echo. He shows me the notes  
clinging to his breath.

"This room is my blanket.  
This day is my hug.  
Hold the love from my eyes."

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Girl In Vegetative State Plays Tennis

Seemingly lifeless in endless REM,  
only internal cycles remain,  
bright cerebral flashes that light up  
when a Cambridge researcher demands,  
'Think about playing tennis'.

The brain fires up, memories  
connect, thoughts whirl.  
Her feet and tennis balls fly  
again. Point, serve, return  
as the MRI calmly observes.

'Now walk around your home.'

This next command launches her  
daily trek in cozy pink slippers  
with a steaming coffee mug  
while singing 'Good Morning Star Shine'  
to fragile white orchids.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Going Home

Orange paper thin wings  
flit fluttering two thousand  
miles. Six months on slivers  
of onerous air and borrowed  
light rising 57 degrees above  
a North American horizon.  
Due south to a mother's  
remembered Mexican sky.

Chemicals curl milkweed  
pods. Sparse feedings  
and eggs to propel futures  
in monarch communities  
or returns on delicate  
floating insect souls.

Mere ganglion brains  
insistently proclaiming,  
This way, this way,

This way home.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Gone Fishing

Gone Fishing

Daily, I am a  
specially educated teacher  
profoundly challenged,

not really  
these ghostlike souls.

Watch us carefully,  
invisible  
between  
the sheets of your music.

Dancing our eyes  
repetitiously in silent  
song.

Please do not presume!

We will not be your red  
fish, blue fish or green.

We are only the beginnings  
and endings  
of many questions

unfathomable

from where  
we were last seen.

We can never be caught.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## How Am I? Well,

useful parts of me  
have not fallen off.  
Thoughts are not missing  
yet. These eyes can  
observe my non-fiction.  
Smiling does not require  
melting somehow.  
A safe place still exists  
somewhere. I am now  
the teaching, not  
the teacher. Everyday  
has the whole day  
to itself. Nobody threw  
dirt in my face. My sun  
still floats in the sky.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# If I Should Lose My Soul

Will music fall flat  
upon my ears? Could  
the sun rising become  
only the day's light?  
Is my laughter then  
only an empty sound?

If I should lose my soul,

might I forget to forgive?  
Would I still practice in joy  
that which could just be done?  
Would I care if you cry?

If I should lose my soul,

would I bargain to live  
one more minute  
without human love?  
Seeing my reflection  
in a rodent's eyes

and in the flick of a  
serpent's tail?

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# It's Just Blood

I had just accidentally smashed  
my boyfriend Howard in the forehead  
with a horseshoe. The blood surged  
through his eight year old fingers,  
dripping down his face. I screamed,  
dropped the horseshoe and spun  
to race towards the house,  
'No, don't tell anyone! ' He tried to  
block me from reaching grown-ups  
and help.

I remember looking into his eyes,  
and seeing blind love, and fear.  
He could forgive me any pain I would  
ever cause him, and deny it as well.  
If they found out he thought,  
then our love was lost. Even now  
I'm amazed, how love can survive,  
in spite of all our visible  
and hidden scars.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Love Feast

As your sun sets  
slowly, let me taste  
your tears.

As you rock and tremble  
memories, let me smell  
your dreams.

As eternity lays you down  
let me spoon your light  
into my eyes.

After you dazzle  
away, let me breathe  
your last drop.

(Published in Bell's Letters - 2006)

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Manifestation Of A Buddha

A child missing for a year in remote Nepal,  
re-emerges now 'The Enlightened one, '  
the reincarnated Buddha, cross-legged  
beneath a tree. No sign of ten months  
of hunger or thirst for anything but silent prayer.  
Bamjon, last seen by tens of thousands  
in 2005 now has shoulder length hair  
with his body wrapped in a simple white cloth.  
People are walking to see him, to be touched  
by a God, some believe. These terrible times  
have called him forth. Molding him into  
Buddha himself, who said, "All that we are  
is the result of what we have thought.  
The mind is everything. What we think  
we become."  
And so he has.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Martin Luther King's Dream - Revisited

It is nobody's fault  
you're poor, black, hispanic or dead  
of an Islam bullet  
centuries from home.

It is terrorism  
that prevented your education or  
denied you your constitutional rights  
of a democracy, running scared  
of it's individual privileges  
to disagree.

It is American  
to stand up, fight back,  
to speak out, against injustice  
for the poorest, most ignorant,  
unworthy, or disabled  
amongst us.

Turn your back once,  
and the privilege is revoked  
for each of us to claim  
'Am I not a man? '  
Worthy of the dignity of life,  
of inherent liberties.

Now that the disenfranchised  
have become the majority,  
how must our 'dreams deferred'  
explode?

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Memories Of Mom

You have forgotten  
who I am, but  
you can clap your hands  
and giggle  
when I kiss you.

We must bathe  
and dress you now  
like that large fragile  
doll you once bought me  
for Christmas.

It happened slowly,  
so we used to see glimpses  
of the proud lady, you  
once were. Now we  
can only treat you  
with dignity

And for now  
I can still hold you  
in my arms and tenderly  
sing to you, the songs  
you once taught me.

Until someday  
you forget  
to breathe.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Men That Have Known Me

Some have traced their fingers  
over the curves of my body  
and my mind.

Many have uncovered gaps  
in my teeth, fading gray  
among the blond.

Others have curled their tails  
and paws possessively into  
my nooks and crannies.

You, alone have known the loving  
whispers, reducing me  
to puddles.

I am nothing, without your flowing  
waters, to fill me,  
refill me again.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Milk Of Life

A pure white Persian cat had just carefully  
shook each of her kitten's throats  
until they were asleep.

She had no milk to feed them.

She laid them in a row in the sun's  
last rays to keep them warm.  
Their eyes dimmed into the night.

Now as I stare into empty cupboards  
and the bottomless grief on mothers'  
faces, I wonder

how many infant souls  
have been silently laid to rest  
gently beneath the daffodils?

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Mom's Passing - (June 28th,2005)

There's not enough air to breathe.

All my pain real  
and imagined, mental  
and physical Is rising  
up from my DNA rushing  
through my cell walls pouring  
down from my veins  
like a gushing spout  
with stripped threads, nothing  
can stop this pain coursing,  
coursing through generations  
of flesh welded to it's kinfolk,  
eye to eye, memory to memory  
birth to death, we all imagine  
ourselves to be seperate  
islands onto ourselves until  
one of us passes.

Then this vacuum  
demands living, breathing,  
coursing pain streaming  
like a river washing away  
the emptiness making  
the world safe  
to breathe again.

(Written and read 2 hours after my mother's death at the Walt Whitman Center -  
Camden, NJ - 6/28/2005) - It was those wonderful poets that helped me cope.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# More

That deaf, dumb, partially blind girl  
still crawls around on her knees,

talking to angels in the cracks  
of the classroom's concrete walls.

Her curly hair is twisted into bread ties.  
Her black skin is chapped white.

Thirteen years she's screamed into  
the emptiness that surrounds her.

The gold stocks rocket, the job market  
crashes, another hurricane pivots

towards the southern hemisphere.  
After hundreds of words I've signed  
into her open palms, understanding  
by tapping her fingertips together,

she demands 'More' and 'More' again.  
'Yes, ' I reply. And now the world begins.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Morning Weather Report

The morning air was angry  
so I closed my front window  
to block the '37th homicide'  
seeping under the wooden sill  
with a sharp biting scent.

Four shots in my foggy  
dream bloated brain  
had preceded the cool bloody  
face of a twenty year man/child  
who suffered only from  
place dysfunction.

His young wife now married  
to the impermanence of  
happiness. Suffocating,

I wedged open the rear  
window allowing entry of  
the neighboring baby's voice  
chirping on the morning breeze,

melancholy falling like dew.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# My God, Will Always Give Me Someone To Love

At birth I opened my eyes  
and saw God in my mother's face.  
Life giving milk poured into me  
from her soft and fleshy space.

My God, always gave me someone to love.

As I grew, parent's arms and fingers  
always held me during endless tries  
on flimsy bikes, my father's hands  
lifting my kites in merciless skies.

My God, always gave me someone to love.

A coincidental teacher would always  
tell me what I needed to know,  
a kind soul always held me,  
when I couldn't humanly let go.

My God, always gave me someone to love.

Now I hold infants in gentle eyes,  
dropping food in hungry minds,  
speaking consciously known replies,  
passed from the beginning of time.

because my God,  
will always give me

someone to love.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Off The Record

Only his brown eyes moved

not the face

or head or body muscles

at all

not even instinctively.

Cognitive activity was so low

it could not be recorded.

Like a puppet I raised

his hands, arms and muscles

in tandem with the flow

of our activities.

No perceivable reasoning

or thoughtfulness

or coherent responses.

In spite of this,

Jason all day long

watched me and laughed

with conscientious glee.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Our Last Jazz Note

Like a beloved child with aids  
New Orleans' soul passed on.  
In denial, a nation prayed  
it wouldn't happen, then  
that it wasn't so.

Katrina, that angry woman  
purged our primeval soul,  
tested our very humanness,  
then piously exhaled  
our last jazz note.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Our Phases Of The Moon

In the first phase, brand new in the light  
there seemed perfect pears, darling daisies,  
warm mother's milk, then the long melting  
marshmallow of days, where mother's  
strong hands lifted me up from her lap,  
each moment's view more glorious,  
just beyond my reach.

In the second phase, with fully rounded days  
illuminated by walks through wild strawberries,  
barefoot toes dug into the earth. The mind too  
expanded to hold it all. By then I found  
words enough to describe a loved one's hands  
and the immensity of their touch.

In the third phase, the waning light  
began unwinding the days that had been full  
of lemonade and wine, sunshine and moonbeams,  
slowly closing the worldly eyes, slipping  
past the beauty of all sight and all words  
to the simple poetry within.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Pass The Ketchup Please

I'm staring at the ketchup  
but I've lost the words.  
'Mon amis' I must leave again.  
The razor sharp scent of  
'La content voyage s'appelle moi'  
(This happy voyage is calling me) .

I'm diving into the luscious pervasive smell  
of dancing in rain puddles.  
'Avec tu, avec tout le monde, tout ou.'  
(With you, with everyone, everywhere.)

I am wearing only a bright yellow raincoat  
and a warm gentle smile.  
Someone forgot my clothes  
to lay across the puddles.

When the popsicle is gone  
the stick burns my tongue.  
But the cherry taste remains in my head  
where my grandmother is calling me  
'Cherry Pie, where is your babushka? '  
It will protect me from this sunshine.  
'Le soleil voler moi vide.'  
(The sun steals my emptiness.)

For me the dark is a warm womb  
about my fetal hands and miniature feet.  
I play hopscotch with the chalk in my mouth  
or is it in my hand and the hungry sea  
sends it's tongue to chase my feet.  
The seagulls yell their warning,  
'Un nageur c'est ne la roche pas.'  
(A swimmer is not a rock.)

I'm flying a newspaper on a stick with string.  
My father glued it together with dreams  
so that my feet won't touch the ground  
but human hands have reached up

and tickled my toes.

'Je reviens a' moi.'

(I return to my consciousness.)

'Will someone pass the ketchup please? '

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Passing Through 1959

On just another tree lined street,  
that we were passing through,  
children were hitting rocks with sticks.  
The baking smell of fresh biscuits  
swirled into our lungs as mother hurriedly  
rolled up our Chevy's windows,  
pushing down its locks with trembling hands.  
When she nervously stopped at a phone booth,  
small black curious fingers pressed up against  
my closed rear window. As she jotted down  
directions for the way home, I simply touched them back,  
one by one, where the raised glass had begun to melt  
between our fingertips.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Pond Scum

Pressure cooked dead zooplankton  
and algae was initially sold to Americans  
as medicinal snake oil. Several hundred  
thousand bottles were consumed before  
it's energy usage proved more marketable.  
Meanwhile in the town of Baku, Azerbaijan,  
North of Iran, villagers could dig a hole  
in the ground, drop in a live coal and start a fire.  
Historically, trillions and trillions of gallons  
of this lucrative pond scum has bubbled  
up to the surface worldwide, naturally consumed  
by hungry bacteria. One hundred fifty billion  
is now spent annually to locate the remaining  
desolate pools. America's pipelines, 161,000 miles  
of arteries, half the distance to the moon await.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Poverty Is Not

An infectious disease  
spread through the air  
or blood.

Nor a dominant gene  
passed down  
from father to son.

Want is not traced  
deep in the palm  
of your hand.

No one chooses  
to go out daily  
alive with hunger.

It is a silent burglar  
with a sharp knife  
cutting away at will.

Leaving behind only  
the form, the shape, the shadows  
of what we are.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Real Portrait

It's the words  
beneath the words  
that frighten me.

Scattered and hidden  
in the back of my mind,  
on scraps of paper,

(in the silences) .

Bold as a burp  
I sometimes drop them carelessly,  
in midsentences, in startled  
gaps of mundane conversation.

I lose them to the hungry air,  
my real portrait, untouched  
glossy face.

(Written for my friend - Carole Clark)

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Relativity

The hibiscus plant screams  
as the researchers beat it,  
or so says the polygraph.  
Then as they think  
about causing it pain,  
the needle spikes.

Plants know, eggs know,  
even yogurt hears  
the universe talking,  
cells in silent chorus,

divining rods to what  
will occur, little compass  
needles magnetically  
charged to the sounds  
of the earth echoing

out in sympatric waves,  
earthquakes in my  
fingertips

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Replaneting

Lay your bare feet  
upon the earth's breast,  
then walk. Dip your  
fingers into her brown  
skin, impregnate green.  
Resuscitate with gales  
of oxygen, inhaling CO2.  
Exchange umbilical fluids  
in this living womb, our  
only undying mother.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Secret Language - A Response

The flower whispered, 'Oh' to the caterpillar,  
Who wrote it for the starlings' next song,  
The housefly danced it across my butter,  
The crickets rubbed their legs to sing along,  
The falling snow stopped to consider.....

How they all were the song  
How they all were the song.

(In response to Shel Silverstein's - Secret Language)

Published in - November 2008

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Secret Of Old Age

(Published in Alabama Anthology 2007)

In worn overalls as patched  
and thin as his shoes and  
with a rusty bucket in hand,  
he walked along the side of the  
road. He was 74 years old  
and carrying fresh cut collard  
greens to his daughter's house  
13 miles away.

Minnie who was 69 was  
running off to work to take  
care of an 'old woman' of 91.

Sarah was 82 and her mom 99.  
They sewed quilts for a living  
and were preparing for the  
mother's 100th birthday party  
soon to come.

I stopped to ask directions  
from Georgia who was hanging  
clothes on the line, she said  
she was 105. She had cleaned  
houses all her life.

So I asked her the Alabama  
secret of old age:

Was it the slow living in the warm sun?  
Was it the clean air or pure water?  
Was it good food prepared by loving hands?

She smiled and said 'Yes, it's all that'

'But mostly..... it's the hard work'.

Then she hung another faded shirt

up on the line.

(One week in Greene County, AL 2004)

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Shape Shifting

Layers of useless flesh less.  
Eyes appear rounder, grasping  
onto certainties once beyond  
wrapping the mind around.

Those previously disappeared  
now emerge with curves  
to be held, layers of oneness  
in harmonious balance.

The fruit of being knows  
it's complete state,  
neither green impalatable  
nor weightiness,

falling too soon.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Ski Hill (Chardon, Ohio)

Crammed into snowsuits like overstuffed  
sausages, rainbow colored scarves  
hid determined grins. Clouds of warmth  
billowed up from our bellies as we marched,  
dragging wood and metal in our wake.

No path in the dazzling white ocean,  
only instinct and children's screams  
carried in the wind's ear, winding through  
the forest playground, calling us forward,  
full of careless snowy frolicking song.

Once at the sacred crest we flew  
on frozen feet, bouncing padded bellies  
on a wild wood mustang footloose  
and flopsy mare, as the frigid white  
rushed into our blinded mute senses.

After 75 seconds of this eternity,  
we trudged upwards again and again  
to swallow a dozen more flights of reckless  
abandonment knowing steaming cocoa awaited  
to melt us back into warm elfin flesh.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Spiritual Shortcomings, Historically Speaking

The first deadly disgusting behavior  
Pontified in the fifth century  
by Pope Gregory the Great  
was predictably punishable in hell  
by being broken upon the wheel.  
Pride goeth before

Lust, the second deadly sin  
in descending order of seriousness,  
of the seven offenses against love itself.  
Avarice guaranteed the sinner perpetual  
dunking in freezing water, while Anger  
would cause one to be dismantled alive.

Suffering from Sadness (or Slothfulness)  
would find an eternal bed of snakes. Avarice  
(or Greed) victims were showered  
with cauldrons of boiling oil. The Gluttonous  
were fed rats, toads and hissing snakes. While  
the lustful amongst us were merely smothered  
in everlasting fire and brimstone.

Salvation, by way of the seven contrary virtues  
delivered souls to heaven above.  
These counteractions were guaranteed by  
Humility against Pride  
Chastity against Lust  
Kindness against Envy  
Abstinence against Gluttony  
Patience against Anger  
Liberality against Greed  
Diligence against Sloth

Worthiness of redemption could also be purloined by a designated  
tithe to the local medieval priest. "Good Works" as well, entered  
into the confessional equation for eternal forgiveness:  
Feed the hungry  
Give drink to the thirsty  
Give shelter to strangers

Clothe the naked  
Visit the sick  
Minister to prisoners  
Or bury the dead.

Authors Note: Regardless of these noble altruistic behaviors, (which usually occur late in life) , I would hope eternal rewards exclude the unrepentative, immoral, shiftless, self-gratifying, good-for-nothing, arrogant shits, that continue to profit in the commercialization and packaging of death by sin.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Strangers In The Night

We were buried in charity: clothes, food and toys  
after the fire took our home and your crib.  
You had only slumbered in this world one night.  
The dew still on your eyelids, when the smoke  
began to fill our lungs. My husband; an actor, a tenor  
could not abide children. So I had left, to paint your  
life yellow, with daisies, and eager drips of paint.  
"An abortion, " he had demanded, and even  
as I nodded my head, I knew it would be  
you, not him that would be laying his head upon  
my breast. As I kissed the dew away, you  
learned to breathe in the cool night air,  
familiar strangers holding us aloft.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Sun Bear's Predictions

(A Sacred Teacher of Chippewa Descent)

The mark of the bear claw  
is upon everything,  
The time has come again,  
for each man child to live  
simply in the sun.

Be aware of the water.  
Is it pure, fresh, clear  
of impurities? Wash  
yourself and your  
loved ones, carefully.  
Drink deeply.

Breathe slowly,  
cleansing your blood.  
Breathe as our earth,  
in complete circles.

Test the soil with your  
own hands. When the food  
you grow is healthy, so  
can your body grow.  
Thank all life that you  
must take within.

This is all we have, bless it  
and we will be blessed.

(Translated into poetry Dec.2007)

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Sweet Thoughts (A Child's Verse)

In my pocket, a single penny  
In my sister's, a lonely dime  
Alone, no sweets can I buy any  
Together, candy all the time.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# The Black Belt Blues

One day Rosa Parks was just too tired  
of accepting that's how things are.  
Martin Luther King had a prophetic vision  
he wouldn't live to see the mountaintop.

Sweltering heat, poverty, racism and despair  
still claim all the breathing space  
between the catfish ponds and the cottonfields.

The blind, the crippled, the poor, and the elderly  
bundle up in layers hugging their own warmth  
to sleep at night, staring at falling stars  
through their cracked and rusty sky.

Children nibble a moldy potato.

Abandoned cars, corpulent vultures  
loveless dogs walking nowhere  
claim these back rural dusty roads.  
Raw sewage pours into the open grass.  
The sun bakes it all hard and crusty.

You can clean motel rooms for a dollar each.  
Walk four miles to wash a white woman's clothes.  
Beg a ride to the grocery store.

Mothers sing their Baptist prayers.  
For your children's sake you stay alive.

The young people have escaped  
rewarded with real jobs, real pay, real benefits  
In the cities and way up north.  
Their mothers used a switch with loving hands  
to help them find their blackbird wings.

But once they've tasted  
respect, human dignity, a life worth living,  
they can't go home again.  
They can't sleep there.

There's no peace in their souls,  
only fear, anger, defiance  
and the god damned bloody tears.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# The Fine Art Of Description

Beethoven, Mozart, musicians all  
speak God's voice with sounds  
until the music is almost,  
yet incomplete. Poets write words,  
full of human fury and love  
and sorrow, just one syllable  
short of eternity. The painters,  
of infinite hues, capture spirituality,  
but only on earthly canvasses.  
Perhaps together the orchestra  
of life can mirror the heavens,  
or even it's simplest form  
of God's natural creations? No,  
all earthly efforts fail,  
when all we ever needed  
was the first pure colorless  
note, written in silence.

Why do we artists struggle  
at all then? To live,  
and love, and write, and paint,  
and sing, and take our part  
in the indestructible art of  
'being? ' To be entirely  
oneself however, is almost  
impossible. But let us practice,  
dear souls, practice in joy.

It is only when those we love  
finally close our unseeing  
eyes, will we open completely  
to the un-physical, spiritual union  
with all that is, free  
of any need  
for description.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# The Poor

Sharing their space  
breathing in their air  
I could not see them.

What they are  
forever lies outside  
my sense of knowing.

Their authentic movement  
daily through their plane  
of existence

lays beyond my words.

I can choose to be or not  
whatever, whoever.....

They are, live, simply  
as they always have,

where they are

and

who they must be.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# The Sunny Side Of Life

Our light producing,  
heat giving, ever shining  
center of our universe  
does not require being  
dug out of the ground,  
protection from radiation  
emissions, controlled growth  
of corn or seaweed  
or even the wind blowing  
in the right direction to  
provide equally distributed,  
communally owned, tax-free,  
solar-operated everything.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# The Woman Who Ate Pittsburgh

Looking for me is useless,  
If you find me, I am not  
able to pass my hand  
through your image

without breaking the illusion.

Stand in front of me, scream.  
It is still you screaming.  
I am always inside my skin,  
me! over and over.

Yes, I have many words,  
strung together they become  
the moment it takes to write,  
only one slice

until we eat it.

That's where  
I'm always found,  
chewing slowly

a melancholy movie,  
dancing daisies,  
collapsing buildings,  
the smell of bread baking,  
transparent people,  
magazines and

little bites of entire cities

until I can swallow the sky.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# To Laugh

Life swirls around me.  
I am out of gear, out  
of sync, one beat off.  
Nothing makes sense.  
I must stay calm  
to avoid panic.

Depression's gray fog  
begins to wrap  
it's smoky fingers  
about me.

My physical well-being  
is now entrusted to  
pink pulsating  
plastic pills

I search deep within  
for a safe path back  
to here

and now a bubbling  
bouncing  
resurrection

because I laugh.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Totems Lost

An orange ball sun sets  
as a green streak explodes.  
Lava rock, palm leaves, and breeding whales  
crest, then submerge  
into subconscious levels. Negro  
clear crystal waters, energy  
dispersed, chilled chi waivers.

Terra homo sapien bellies  
lay supline on wood floating, earth  
sealed by lava fires, chilled with  
trade winds returning. Rivers ran  
red as man prevailed over Gods  
and nature. Sharks now swimming  
backwards, humans rise into darkened  
skies, green only a mirage,  
a pretense, omens forgotten  
in totems lost.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## Wanted-Missing Link

Blonde, green-eyed, twice-loved UU  
humanist seeks mature liberal minded  
humorist, who eats words for breakfast.  
Must require walking, breathing  
and just being. Sometimes will  
come home for lunch of tai chi.  
Prefer unprofessional males able  
to vulcan mindlock with my cat.  
Musicians, artists and poets  
without bipolar disorder considered.  
Must be secure in your own silence.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

## What's Left?

Immunity from feeling came from mentally  
engaging in murders, every eight minutes,  
on a high definition Panasonic television with a  
wrap-around sound system. Each morning's local  
Advertiser obituaries describe the demise of vague  
acquaintances and old school chums, as well as  
the explicit details of crimes which occur within  
a ten block radius. Reinforced by the by daily statistics  
of civilian casualties from Israeli bombings, Iraq villages,  
from flooding rivers or poisonous imported tomatoes.  
Overloaded, my short term memory switches off,  
making me unconcerned about the man ran over,  
left to die on a street in Hartford, Connecticut. At night,  
I climb on the cross-town bus with meaningless strangers,  
I secretly imagine their lovers somewhere, somewhere else,  
still entwined in passion and tangled hair. A little shiver,  
but then a critical mind-saving gasp of air releases me  
from survival instincts, then I can see their faces  
begin to refocus again, in the clear pools of our eyes.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele

# Where Are The Flower Children?

Our sons and daughters conceived in  
strawberry fields have talked dad  
into tying his hair back and mom  
into wearing a bra and conforming  
to the media-hyped double-talk:  
'Lose your civil rights to protect  
your freedoms' and 'Spend ourselves  
into a massive national debt  
to protect our economy' while  
pretending everything is still  
manufactured in America, or at least  
assembled here, not carried over  
invisible foreign borders,  
stamped MADE IN AMERICA.

Cheryl Lynn Moyer Peele