

We have all lived a life and our stories, though different, remain the same. Love, family, tragedy, and death.

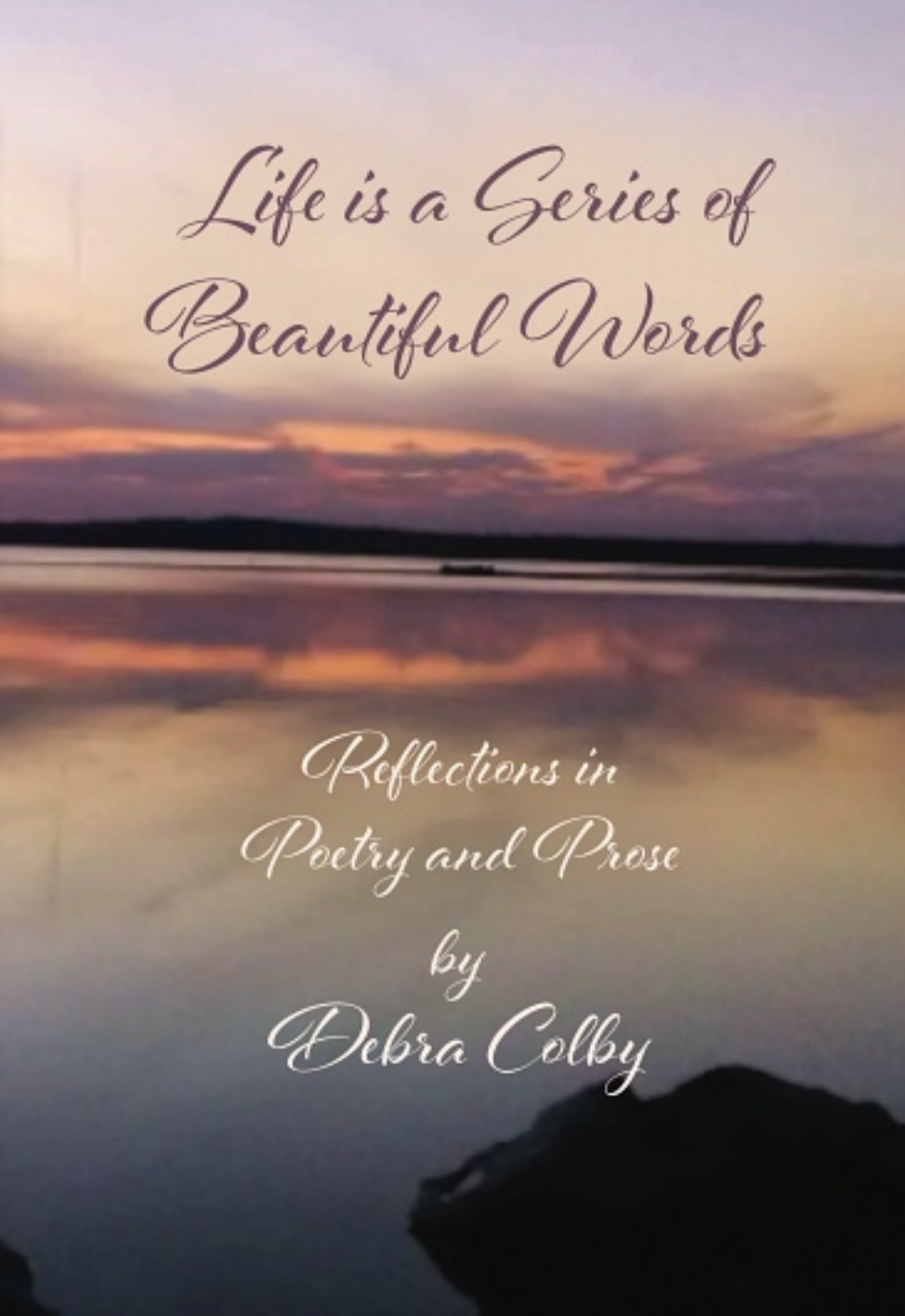
Life is a Series of Beautiful Words: Reflections in Poetry and Prose

By Debra Colby

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*Life is a Series of
Beautiful Words*

*Reflections in
Poetry and Prose*

*by
Debra Colby*

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Introduction

The woman opens her computer, looking through files and files of snippets, beginnings, and thoughts of words that she has written through the years. There are many. She has been writing ever since she can remember; never throwing anything away. Always saving the scraps of paper and partially thought-out ideas. She has saved them because in the back of her mind she had an inclination that...someday...she might want to put all those half-formed ideas together in order to form a complete story. At over sixty, she thinks that now might be.. that someday.

When she began writing, there were no computers, just notebooks, diaries, journals, pieces of paper, jotting down her thoughts and feelings on whatever was handy to write on. Over the years, she has transferred those handwritten notes onto hard drives into one computer, then another, and another. There is a bowlful of hard drives to wade through. Sometimes the stuff makes no sense, not even to her; other times she reads her words and realizes her feelings were so deep that she struggles to read her own words.

But today she has decided to go through those files. She doesn't know why; she simply feels compelled to do

so. She inserts the first hard drive into her computer and begins clicking on the files. She smiles when the first one opens. The hard drive is loaded with pictures of her daughter when she was a baby. The memories of that time wash over her. The happiness she felt at seeing her child grow. Her daughter's father and how young and handsome he was, how completely devoted he was to his first child. The woman promises herself that she will show her daughter these files. Her daughter is now a grown woman, with a family of her own. She needs to be reminded of this time. A time that she doesn't remember because she was so young.

The second hard drive she inserts is full of more photos, those of her young son, as well as her daughter. Always together. Her daughter was more of mother hen than she was. Although the two children had different fathers, and were technically half-brother and sister, they never thought of one another as that. They were simply brother and sister to one another. There was no half, they were simply a family. These photos cause the woman's heart to clench. The love they all shared for one another is clearly shown on her children's faces, as well as on her own face.

After clicking through the files of those hard drives, she inserts the next, this is the one she has been unconsciously searching for. It is the short verses of

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poetry and prose that took her many years to write. She realizes that after going through the hard drives loaded with photos of her children and her life, it's the actual written words that seem to hit harder. They are the words that invoke immediate memories of a certain time in her life, good and bad. It is this compilation of work that causes her mind to wander with each piece she reads, and her emotions shift constantly.

As she rereads her words, she takes time to reflect on each memory that prompted the poem.

Madness

We watched a movie together.
In which his love was proven.
When he joined her in her descent into madness.
Rather than abandon her.

I'm not certain that I could join you.
If madness were your fate.
But the madness of my love.
Would never allow me to desert you.
When you needed me most.

I would walk with you, holding your hand.
As you meander through the corridors of your own
private hell.

Holding your body as you tremble.
Lending my ears as you scream out your agony.
Drown in your eyes, as your tears make a lake.

Follow in your footsteps.
As we wander your path to nowhere.
Believe in your words that have no meaning.
And love you unconditionally because you are my heart.

Never giving up on finding you.
Beneath your temporary shell of insanity.

I would help you break that shell.
For you to see once again.
The light of love.
That even madness cannot extinguish.

Inspired by the movie, What Dreams May Come, starring Robin Williams, the woman has never forgotten this movie. The movie touched her and held her in its grip. The premise that love can be so deep and so profound that a person will go to hell in order to save the one they love, spoke volumes to her.

To this day, as the woman reads this piece of poetry, the movie plays in her mind.

When a True Friend is Needed

She's beautiful, popular, and proud.
Her friends are kids, from just the right crowd.

Look how she laughs, talks, and smiles.
Her admirers swarm as they walk the school tiles.

She looks in the mirror and winks at the image.
Knowing her beauty will win in any boyfriend
scrimmage.

Her clothing is perfect, ensuring name brand labels
appear.
Then tossing them carelessly when there's a rip or a tear.

I dare to walk up to her say, "Hello."
My knees are shaky and trembling out of control.

She looks at me with scorn and contempt.
I feel as though I've fallen and there's no safety net.

Eyebrow arched, her words like a sword.
I'm not the kind of friend that she's looking for.

Her laughter rings true, behind my back.
I hide in my locker to stop the tears in their tracks.

But at the end of day, once her crowd is all gone.
She sits silent and lonely on the bus ride towards home.

Her slender shoulders sag, her head hangs down.
The bus stops at her house, her face wears a frown.

Framed in the doorway is a well-dressed man.
An angry expression on his face, a drink in his hand.

She pauses, walking slowly to the house.
Visibly shrinking into her expensive new blouse.

His loud angry voice carries to the bus.
She cringes and cowers, afraid of his touch.

I flinch when I see his hand connect with her face.
A flaw upon her beauty that even make-up can't erase.

I realize I was wrong about the person I thought she was.
How she hides behind an image because of
circumstance and cause.

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How she might need a friend who'll hold her hand as
she cries.

A friend who'll look past her persona and pride.

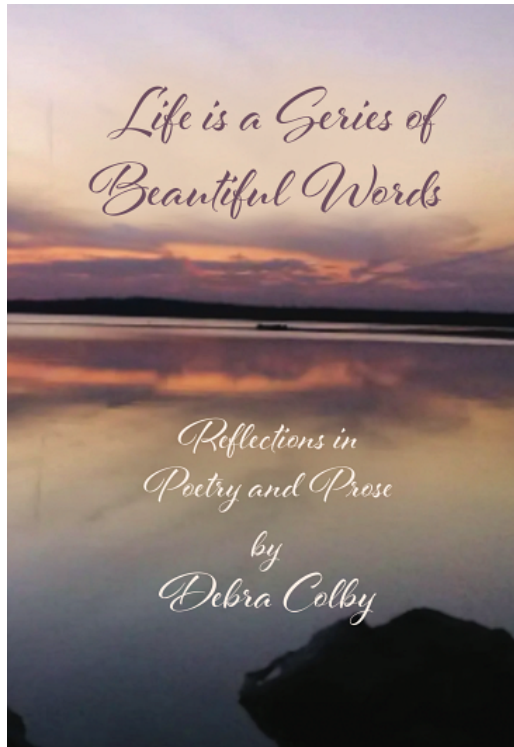
A friend who'll see the terrified child within.
Screaming to move away from those hidden sins.

I may not be the friend that she's looking for.
But I can be the friend who battles the same war.

The woman thinks of the girls she knew in high school. How she yearned to be a part of the "popular" crowd. Knowing too, that she'd never be a part of their inner circle. Her life was too different from theirs; she carried too many secrets.

She was envious of these girls who seemed to have everything and how life always seemed so good to them. Until one day the woman realized how wrong she'd been, how one moment changed her entire perspective.

Envy was immediately replaced with empathy. And how wanting to be ...like... the others, turned into wanting to be ...there... for the other.



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