

*Whisper
of a Vision*

Cheryl
Cottreau

What others are saying about Whisper of A Vision

Cheryl's poetry takes us on a journey of self-reflection and discovery. By sharing her words with us, Cheryl inspires us to live vibrant, full lives, to open ourselves to others. In doing so, we connect in friendship and realize we are not alone with our struggles. A pleasurable and thought-provoking read.

Jan Jenkins

Artist and Poet - www.RiverWestArtworks.com

I read Whisper of a Vision with great interest as the author Cheryl Cottreau and I have been friends for many years. The poems surprised me as they gave me an insight into my friend that I did not know. The poems touched me with their openness and raw vulnerability. They made me laugh and ponder, as well as brought a few tears to my eyes. A lovely read.

Ilene Schmaltz

Vice President Marketing - Channel West Partners

Cheryl Cottreau's first offering to the realm of poetry, Whisper of a Vision shares vivid imagery and is a revealing journey into the imagination of its author. Wonderfully crafted this compilation shows the skill of prose and unceasing quest for fulfillment that we all aspire to. I laughed, I cried as it became part of me.

Christopher Kuzek,

Poet, Writer, Playwright "Gateways" 2011

In reading Cheryl's poetry, I was struck by the strength and power in the messages. There is an array of emotion that is expressed, and I found myself connecting deeply with the words and images that arose. Each poem has a honest truth and I appreciate that Cheryl found a way to put that truth into such a relatable voice.

Jodi Moodie

Behavioral Health Consultant

I finished Whisper of A Vision and would first like to say thank you. Thank you for asking me to read your work. Poetry is so personal and I feel honored to have been able to experience your thoughts, ideas and moments through your words.

I have to admit that I was engaged right from the first poem. I found your poetry to be thought-provoking, touching and heartfelt. I came away from the book with messages to choose our path, accept our choices, learn from our mistakes, live in the moment and accept who we are as individuals, whole-heartedly both inside and out. I did not expect to have such visceral reactions of laughter, in some cases, and be on the verge of tears, in others. I don't consider myself a religious person, but I am very spiritual and was able to relate to many of your poems. I enjoyed going on this journey with you.

Some of my favorites were: Mountaintop Marvel, Body Image, Images and Groceries.

Jenny Miller

Language Arts Teacher - Calgary Board of Education

Whisper of a Vision is Calgary author Cheryl Cottreau's first book, but it is by no means a beginner's effort. Here is a work of subtlety and grace, the culmination of 20 years of wordsmithing, a whisper of a vision that will illuminate for the reader the big and the small issues of life. Whether in lyrical moments such as we find in the titular poem, or in poignantly funny performance pieces like 'Body Image', all of the poems remind the reader that the author, and her audience, are so much more 'Than what stands on this floor'. These charming and uplifting poems remind us to 'go and be the best you are'. I would urge readers to go and buy the book.

Dr. Gerry Turcotte, PhD

President & Vice-Chancellor - St. Mary's University College

Whisper of a Vision

Mystical Musings



Whisper of A Vision
mystical musings by Cheryl Cottreau

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For more information on ordering additional
copies of "Whisper of a Vision", please contact:

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Dedicated to That Which Created Me.
Thank you for this Gift.

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and her encouragement to get started.

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and encouragement

Kathleen Mailer for showing me how
I could get this out of the closet.

The team at Aurora Publishing for doing
what I could not.

And to all my friends who listened - when I woke
them up in the middle of the night and said,
"I wrote another poem, do you want to hear it?"

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Introduction

Poetry is not something one can wrestle from a pen. It flows like a river of light through you. You can only be so lucky to catch the words before they slip away into the dark void of forgetfulness. The words are, much like a wave upon the shore, rushing up madly, only to slip quietly away.

Of all the images and phrases that have danced through my mind, I have managed to capture a few. If a word painted image gives you a moments pause, celebrate it, savor it and know that somewhere, I am grateful for the opportunity to have touched your mind.

Whisper of a Vision

What strange journeys
We souls tread
Each time the earthly cycle calls
And bids us grace this mortal plane
With our immortal feet

Past memories sleep
Foreknowledge hid
Pure soul thought garbed in fleshly cloak
Embracing pain and sorrow as
We seek to be complete

Grieve not my friend
Each journey's brief
Unbind your heart from fear and see
The joy of giving from your depths
The shadows will retreat

Do not lose sight
Of where you've been
Or where you've chosen yet to go
Remember - Love is why we're here
Great soul growth will you reap

The Day Connection Was Made

Strolling down a street in Banff
A friend with me
Yet not
For I am miles away in thought
I am lost
In the visions I am seeing
Not with my eyes
But visions none the less

Each one around me
Has this glow
Of a greater ghostly self
Much larger, greater
Than the form
That's no more than a shell
And each unto the other bound
In a communion of white light
Beyond the scope of words

We are all One
This earthly shadow
Of buildings, rocks and dust
Is no more real
Than vibrating atoms be
Taking shapes
Of our collective choosing
Dense patterns
Of our concurring mutual dream

Beyond the place
Of time and space
Linked by our common thought
We create
From substance soup
The stage, the roles, the props
To bring to life
Our unique souls
Beauty to expression
Unaware that 'It' is us

Mountaintop Marvel

Sometimes you walk the path of life
The days appear the same
The stones that lay beneath your feet
Are dull and gray and plain

Your head is bowed, your eyes cast down
Your mind is filled with "shoulds"
You wonder why you're here at all
You're so misunderstood

Come rest awhile, my precious friend
Your vision is unclear
There's more to life than what you see
In this dark and tarnished mirror

Raise your eyes and look about
Great beauty's all around you
Go climb a mountain and look down
At everything before you

Feel the sun and smell the breeze
The grass, the trees, the forest
Listen close and you will hear
The birds that sing the chorus

Look from this height and you will see
The path that you were walking
Is one you chose so long ago
When your head did all the talking

Now listen to your heart this time
And ask yourself this query
Who am I and what are dreams
And why of love I'm leery?

Now when you know the answers clear
And you finally understand
Come down from there, rejoin the path
But this time lend a hand

Reach out to those who walk alone
And share all that you've seen
Remind them that the mountain's there
You know because you've been

And you will see your path is changed
It doesn't seem so tough
The stones you thought were dull and plain
Are diamonds in the rough

**Body
Image**

I stand at the mirror
Facing my fear
And looking at what I dare see
A middle-aged child
Somewhat larger and wild
Than the image I carry in me

For appearances sake
I need a re-make
Of my body, my make-up, my hair
For if what the world sees
Is the essence of me
Then I'd hide in a cave in despair

My breasts are too large
My rear like a barge
My hair all in blonde disarray
With dimples and wrinkles
And eyelids with crinkles
I was tempted to turn right away

Yet I started to giggle
When I looked at my wiggle
For a great sense of humour God has
For what better place
To store all this grace
Than a body of copious mass

I am much more
Than what stands on this floor
And gazes in this piece of glass
My beauty's within
And it is a great sin
To think it's in the shape of my ass

Chameleon

Man of mystery
Aura of stone
Who are you
When you're alone

Nothing about you
Is as appears
The path to your soul
Is a House of Mirrors

Your smile enchants
Your looks entice
Those steel blue eyes
Are sharp as ice

So much of your life
Remains undercover
Unknown to the woman
You take as a lover

How does it feel
To never be known
The guards in the palace
Your heart's on the throne

Man of mystery
Aura of stone
Who are you really
When you're alone

Serendipity

While gathered for a holy feast
Filled with the love and laughter
Familiar friends, good food and song
Was all that I was after

Yet from the quiet shadows came
A voice I didn't know
A gentle spirit called to me
And challenged me to grow

Draw near to me, our minds entwine
For just a little while
Explore the meaning of our souls
To dream, to touch to smile

So I ventured closer to the flame
It's soft light gently calling
Caught in the wonder of its glow
And the shadows that were falling

But as I stared into the light
The vision that appeared
Was reflections of my dark despair
And all the things I feared

How frightening it was to see
The image I had made of me...

But recognition of despair
Is on the path of healing
And insight grew and I was glad
To touch what I was feeling

When in the dark and light is shed
Your path becomes more clear
I laughed and turned, saying to myself
"I should be over here!"

This path is where my dreams all lay
My gifts and talents dusty
My sense of purpose once so sure
From long neglect was rusty

My altered course before me lay
With wondrous things ahead
But the gentle spirit behind me stays
With many things unsaid

Our journeys lead us miles apart
With tears I bid farewell
He'll always be within my heart
As one who's loved so well

Words

Words

They are my playthings
For building castles in the air
They give flesh to my images
And substance to my thoughts
They are
My art form
My expression
My pulse
The extension of my Spirit
Which in itself has no limitations

"Talk is cheap
And words mean nothing"
Your poor defense
Against the searing searchlights
Of my probing rhetoric
Hide in the dark cave
Of misunderstanding
And guarded secrets
Deny yourself the joy
Of binding with another
In mutual comprehension

Which is born through the
Blood
Sweat and
Tears
of
Words

Blues Harp Man

Blues Harp Man
All dressed in black
Cool hat rim
Teasing

The laughter in your eyes
Hair a tumble down your back
Play a song for me
Just me

From what shadows
Have you appeared
Mysterious sprite
Leprechaun

Your aura lights are dancing
Your gentle heart intrigues my soul
Where is your pot of gold?
Find mine.

Balance

I see you do battle
Your estrogen psyche
With you testosterone form
I feel your confusion
As you struggle with expression
Expected of your sex
Yet not completing who you are
Physical strength
With a tender, fragile heart
How can you husband
When part of you needs nurturing
Love, support
Your gentle female side
Cries to be enfolded
Embraced

Once more, my love
We meet again
Our roles by form dictated
You with male
And I in woman cast
Yet is this just a joke
Or to cosmic humour fated
For are we rightly fit?

And I
With half a stallion heart
A warrior's soul
Survivor of dark shadows
Sword sharp
Keen eye
Eager for all things new
Impatient with mundane sameness
You need from me
More than I know of giving
For when I was needing
None was there
And I filled the gaps
Myself

Stand close to me
Unite the light
Of our living selves
Let balance be the goal

Draw from me what I can give
But do not take it all
Let me teach you how
To draw from your own
Untapped well
And I will drop my shield

Slowly

And risk my softer side
A woman am I still

We are a match
Though in contradictory form
We can stand in each other's shoes
And let compassion reign
Instead of judgment

Images

Images

Flash through my mind

Like fairies

Gathered for a midsummer night's eve dance

Clothed in colors

Shades of my emotions

They dance with joy

They dance with abandon

Their movements

Meld colors into beautiful mosaics

Reflecting the inner core

Of my being

"Let us share the dance"

They say to each other

"Let us open the door to the stage

Our heart

And let others witness the dance

So they too can rejoice

Or weep

As the colors shape the stirrings of the soul"

So the spectators gather

Curious of the unusual display

So foreign to their experience

They watch

With guarded eyes and hardened hearts

Their stony masks

So firmly

So sadly in place

The critique begins
"There is far too much colour here!
It would be so much better
In black and white"

"The choreography is all wrong
It requires much more discipline"

"This should not be seen at all
It's obscene"

Most turned away
Some stayed
But were silent
Unable
Or unwilling to respond

The dancers retreated
With bowed heads
Confused and hurt

They conferred
"The dance should be private
For our pleasure only"
said Depression

"Perhaps we didn't do it right
and they just don't understand"
said Melancholy

"The dance should stop!"
spit Anger
"We should become like them
Controlled and disciplined"

"No"
sang Laughter
"The dance can never stop
We are the dance
To stop is to die"

"We cannot deny ourselves
Or our expression
We must soar in the richness
Of our being"
Piped Love and Joy in unison
"There are souls who understand
We will seek them out"

Reason calmly stated
"The dance must go on
And it must be shared
The sharing is a gift
The gift must be presented
But there will be a cost

Only to those who also have
A dance to share
Shall the dance be presented
Only to those whose own dance
Is rich in colour
From the darkest dark
To the brightest light
Only to those who have
The gift to share"

So
The dance continues
The movements
The music
Flowing together
To create the uniqueness
Of...Me

Be

Exist

Be still

Exist peacefully

Be still and know

Exist peacefully in the knowledge

Be still and know that I am

Exist peacefully in the knowledge of Being

Be still and know that I am God

Exist peacefully in the knowledge of Being One

With

All

Aftermath

Sad eyes
Remorseful heart
Who knows the pain
That churns in me

A psychological set up
A time bomb rigged
To shatter a shaky structure

Clear the landscape
Of all things
All friends unsure
Mourn the dead
But survival
Is a higher calling

As a forest fire rages
And clears the land of dead wood
So it brings fertility
To a brush choked land

You may stand me on trial
In the eyes of your judgment
And that first stone weighs heavy in your hand
Yet can you say you never sinned

Count the cost of condemnation
Whose soul bears the pain
Of anger and unforgiveness?

Not mine!
As I let the light of renewal and compassion
Into my own hurt heart

I stand naked before this dawn
Arms upheld in supplication
And begin again

Suzanne

I went for a walk with my son
He was visiting from so far away
He'd moved to follow a woman
With his family he could no longer stay

"Why do you love her?"
I asked him
Seeking a glimpse of his heart
That's now unseen by his mother
Now that we're so far apart

"Because she loves Me!"
He stated
With an impish and mischievous grin
Not wanting to go much further
Not wanting to go deeper within

"No, really" I urged
"Can't you tell me?"
What of her you truly adore?
That captured your heart and brought you to be
At home on a far distant shore"

He shifted to thoughtful...
And then he replied.

"She's sweet and loving and kind
She's strong and smart and refined
She's caring and witty
Outgoing and pretty

But I think I love most
First and foremost
Is that I really think that she's beautiful
Yes, I really think she's so beautiful
And I am grateful to know that she's mine."

My heart welled up with love and pride
For his soul lay bare, open and wide
Thank you Suzanne
For loving my son
He chose well when he made you the One.

The Gift

The tousled hair
The child-like grin
Mischievous
As one caught in a minor
Misdemeanor
Chastised
By the patient parent

A shooting star
Across the back drop
Of a darkened
Jaded sky
Illuminating the path of those
Fortunate enough
To catch the glimpse
Of a quickly fading light

Play for me
Those sad sweet songs
Brought forth by those long dead poets of sound
Reborn upon your strings

Play for me
The rhythms that roll within you
That vibrate from your fingers
And resonate in my dancing feet

Take me with you
When your creative mind
Takes you on intellectual journeys
Far above
The arid desert
Of this barren landscape

Let me grasp your coat tails
And though the air be rare
I can hold on
Tightly
Firmly
Lead me to visions
That from the ground
Have no shape or substance

Scold me not
For I like you
Am still searching for my meaning
And I still stumble
Over my self created stones

I look to you
Not as a god
But as an inspiration
Lead me to a higher plane
Where I can run like a child
Through my field of dreams
Where the sweet smell of the flowers
Of my potential
Fills my head
Like a fragrant drug

You may leave
But you are never gone
From the halls of my memory
For the tousled hair
And the child-like grin
Is cast against the wall of my mind
Never to fade

Healing Song

A cloud of contentment
Halos 'round my head
The visions before me clear
All important things now said

The sun streaks through my window
Leaf shadows cast across my floor
The dark despair of night has passed
The new dawn creeps beneath my door

The little voices taunted
My inner peace of mind
"They never really loved you"
Their tones were so unkind

Yet from the center of the heart
The source of my well-being
A spirit rose, unfettered now
With a wisdom I'd been seeking

Wrapped within its loving arms
The warm voice gentle in my ear
"They never really knew you
You have nothing else to fear"

"Now go and be the best you are
You have a special gift
Share yourself with those who care
So many need the lift
That only you can give
With your open heart and giving soul
This world has so much pain
So be a ray of sunshine
In a land that's soaked with rain"

So

A cloud of contentment
Halos 'round my head
The visions before me clear
All important things now said

Mistress of the Bottle

When we met about a year ago
Your heart was battered and bruised
You were looking for a brand new start
You were tired of being abused
You'd been with her for such a long time
And you thought it was time to be free
And I was so happy to be there for you
'cause you left that lover for me

Our love was that special kind
That only comes true in dreams
You woke up and started missin' her
And pulled it all apart at the seams
Reality is the key to my world
Forgetfulness the magic of hers
And you forgot everthing you learned
When familiar passions were stirred

Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Her charms are sweeter than mine
Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Ya, she'll promise you a real good time
In her arms you long to be
Where you can make believe you're wild and free
Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Guess it's time you'll be leavin' me.

You say you want to be with me
And just keep her on the side.
But when I see the things that she does to you
I just want to run and hide
You're walkin' down a steep dark path
Don't want to watch you stumble and fall
If you can't give me all of your love
I don't want any at all

Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Her charms are sweeter than mine
Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Ya, she'll promise you a real good time
In her arms you long to be
Where you can make believe you're wild and free
Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Guess it's time you'll be leavin' me.

Mistress of the bottle is callin'
Go and have yourself a real good time.

Real Men Don't Hold Hands and Kiss

You stand there in the doorway
Solitarily
So strong and so alone
Yet never lonely
Never needing the accolades of others
To build your self esteem
Since
Real men don't hold hands and kiss

Talented!
The music dances from your fingers
You stroke those keys so gently
So lovingly
Caressing each note
The sounds
Caress my heart
The way I want your hands
To caress my body
But
Real men don't hold hands and kiss

A man of mystery
So hard to understand
Without the words
Without the touch
The language that I understand
Yet you are on a different plane
Above
Or below
Or just somewhere else
I don't know
But where
Real men don't hold hands and kiss

Yet love grows
In many strange places
And from the oddest seeds
And your gentle heart
And loving soul
Has caused it to germinate
In me
So I accept the challenge
And I'll bear the tears
Because I know
Real men don't hold hands and kiss

The Lesson

A child upon the beach I was
Grasped in my father's hand
He led me to the ocean great
That kissed the edge of land

Into the waves I boldly strode
No fear while he was near me
He said he'd teach me how to swim
I'd have to trust completely

My body held above the waves
I gently was supported
His hand beneath my back and head
I felt I was transported

But as he gently pulled away
A panic gripped my heart
The trust I thought was so secure
Completely fell apart

I splashed and floundered, gasped for air
I sank just like a stone
His hands reached out to let me know
That I was not alone

"If you let go of what you know
Of water's fluid state
And let yourself be one with it
You'll see how you relate"

I learned the way for love was taught
And the earth is the decoder
It changed the way I saw myself
I'm now a Starlight Floater

Universal Union

Brother from the stars
In this life, timely met
We've been apart so long
We finally paid the debt

Let's this time hold the Truth
As our reason for expression
For not being true to who we are
Leads to sadness and depression

Remember we are here to serve
Whole and complete our Being
To move our thoughts and bring to life
The visions we are seeing

There is much work for us to do
Let's face the right direction
Back to back, not face to face
Is the most Divine selection

We only have the moment Now
To teach the truth on Oneness
So let's reach out in the Light of Love
To all of those around us

I know this trip we'll get it right
Together or apart
For beyond the form of time and space
We're one within our heart

Groceries

She had four kids
Four kids under the age of five
Age of five
When she became a single mother
Single
How did you ever get groceries?

It was winter
Dark and grey
Like my mood
Grey and dark and broke
So broke
No food
None at all for four hungry, restless mouths
Well, not quite broke
Two dollars and twenty cents
Enough for beans or some other canned concoction
Something, anyways

The walk was 10 blocks
To the grocery store
10 blocks away
In the grey and the dark and the cold
But I had to go
And so did they
For who would watch
My four little mouths
Four hungry, little mouths

Bundled up and off we go
The four in the sled
And I pulled
10 blocks to the grocery store
10 blocks away

We got our little cans
All four standing in the cart
Entertainment for all the other shoppers
I wonder if they would still have smiled
If they knew my desperation

Outside to the sled
Re-zipper zippers
Undone in a warm and well lit store
Gloves re-gloved
And hats re-hatted
Bundle up and off we go
Off across the parking lot
The snowy, dark grey parking lot

It was at Clarke Sideroad
I realized my mistake
My little bag of cans sitting on the newsstand
While we re-zipped re-gloved and re-hatted
Sitting on the stand
And not in my cold hands
Not on it's way for supper

"Just stay right here!" I commanded
Too weary to cross again
The dark and grey and snowy parking lot
With the full load
"Just one moment, stay here and I'll be right back"
"We promise!" they said
False faith and poor judgment and I was off

I ran so fast
Almost backwards, watching, trusting in their words
"We promise"
In the store, grab the little bag
Perched where I had left it in my momentary lapse
One minute and I was gone
Out the door again
One minute, inattentive

That's all it took
One minute
And four snow suited, zipped, gloved and hatted
Little forms
All going in four directions
Along busy Clarke Sideroad

What a terrible mother!
What a lazy, thoughtless, terrible mother
Her little ones running alone
In evening dusk
Along the busy street, Clarke Sideroad

I gathered them up
Safely, how fortunate
Four little heads
In a row
One in front of the other
All laughing because of their great adventure
10 blocks to go
And I cried all the way

Bottom Line

I am an accountant

I am a writer

I am an accountant

I am a writer and a poet

I am an accountant

I am a writer and a poet, a mystic and a muse

A teacher, a healer and an artist

A speaker and a leader

A counselor and a friend

I am an accountant

If I am so many different things

With so many different talents

Why do I spend 50 hours a week

Being an accountant?

Because for now, the pay is better

Mind

In the Beginning was Mind
And Mind Thought
And Thought Created

And every thing that ever was
Or will be
Past, present, future
Known and unknown
Was present at that moment

And Creation multiplied
As Thought defined itself.

And Creation knew Mind as
The Universe
Consciousness
The Creator...God

God revealed Itself as
I Am

I Am the Thought of God.

Notes:

About the Author



Whisper of a Vision is Cheryl's first publication. Her passion is mysticism, spirituality and philosophy. Her verbal images are rooted in the wide range of esoteric literature she has read over the years. Her favorite saying is "my ideas have wings but only stones fall out of my mouth."

She understands the Divine as the space between the atoms and that we all "live and breathe and have our being" in That Which Created Us.

Her life has been colorful, to say the least. She was a single mom with 4 children under the age of 5 when she was 26 and experienced 20 years of debilitating depression. About the age of 40, she discovered a key to recovery and went on to create a life of power and healing. Writing and journaling marked the guideposts along the way and now is beginning a new phase of her life as a published author and speaker.

Cheryl lives in Calgary, Alberta, works as an Oil and Gas analyst and raises her granddaughter full time.

For more information or to order a copy of
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Whisper of a Vision is a collection of poems written over a period of 20 years. They reflect moments of light and inspiration as well as the darker shadows. Sometimes they sprang forth when I pondered some deep mystical question and sometimes when listening to a cute guy play the harmonica in the bar. Poetry is everywhere in life just waiting for the twist of a phrase in the mind of the writer and of course the pen upon the paper.



Whisper of a Vision is Cheryl's first publication. Her passion is mysticism, spirituality and philosophy. Her verbal images are rooted in the wide range of esoteric literature she has read over the years. Her favorite saying is "my ideas have wings but only stones fall out of my mouth."

Cheryl lives in Calgary, Alberta, works as an Oil and Gas analyst and raises her granddaughter full time.

"*Whisper of a Vision* is Calgary author Cheryl Cottreau's first book, but it is by no means a beginner's effort. Here is a work of subtlety and grace, the culmination of 20 years of wordsmithing, a whisper of a vision that will illuminate for the reader the big and the small issues of life. Whether in lyrical moments such as we find in the titular poem, or in poignantly funny performance pieces like 'Body Image', all of the poems remind the reader that the author, and her audience, are so much more 'Than what stands on this floor'. These charming and uplifting poems remind us to 'go and be the best you are'. I would urge readers to go and buy the book."

Dr. Gerry Turcotte, PhD
President & Vice-Chancellor - St. Mary's University College

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