

*It's Not All About  
Test Scores*

I understand the need for accountability;  
we all have goals to reach,  
Especially if you work with kids  
and it's your job to teach;  
Preparing them for the high tech world  
of bits and bytes and browsers,  
So they can get a job at Google  
And wear sports coats and wool trousers.

But even if they don't become  
some space-age engineer,  
Or a doctor who can cure disease  
or free people from their fear,  
Maybe while children go to school,  
they could have a little fun;  
And maybe they don't have to wait  
for the work-packet to be done.

But maybe as they sit and think  
and dream and wish and laugh,  
The score they get for being kids  
Will count at least for half  
Of who they are and what they'll be  
as they try to do their best.  
And that evaluation can't be made  
with some criteria referenced test!

*Toast That I  
Wished That I'd Made*

*(Dedicated to Julie and Larry)*

I went to a wedding in a big church,  
attended by family and friends.  
It was a joyous affair, with reference to God  
and all that the liturgy lends.  
And when it was over, there was a reception,  
where the newly married couple was toasted,  
While those lucky enough to be in attendance,  
drank wine and were beautifully hosted.  
And the sentiments expressed were spoken so  
sweetly of family and future devotion,  
Of an impending separation brought on by war,  
across continents and more than one ocean.  
And I wanted to stand and make a toast of my own  
in front of the bride and the groom,  
In front of all those I admire so much  
gathered in the midst of that room.  
But I sat next to my wife holding her hand,  
only thinking of what I should have said,  
"That it was an honor to be in the presence of  
love,"  
but I sat there in silence instead!

## *Pickin'*

An old man once told me,  
“When you’re pickin’ a wife,  
Don’t pick too quick,  
‘cause you’re pickin’ for life!  
And follow your heart,  
That’s real good advice,  
Make sure that she’s sweet,  
yet she’s still got some spice!

And when you think that you’ve found her,  
and you can’t be more sure,  
And life just ain’t right  
when you can’t be with her,  
Then tell her, you love her,  
and don’t leave no doubt;  
You’ve finally discovered  
what life’s all about.”

The old man gave a sigh,  
I think he felt better.  
He said, “Sure is cold,”  
then he put on his sweater,  
And he fell off to sleep  
in his big comfy chair.  
I was glad to be with him,  
I was glad he was there.

## *The Baseball Game*

All around were my fans, old and young alike.  
Sometimes the pitcher threw a ball, sometimes he threw a strike,  
And right nearby I saw a girl with freckles and short hair,  
And when you talk of having fun, I'm sure she had her share.

I wondered just how old she was, I guess it didn't matter,  
Just then the home team came to bat and Reggie was the batter.  
He took three balls without a strike, then took another sign,  
Before he hit one long and deep, he'd homered down the line.

The ball bounced right beside the girl then sailed up to me,  
I wrapped my hands around that ball and it was mine for free!  
The little girl smiled up at me, though her eyes look kind of sad.  
I think because I held the prize, the ball she almost had.

But instead of feeling glad about that ball I caught,  
I felt as if I took her ball and that I should have not.  
So I walked down to her chair. I said, "I bet you're eight?"  
She said, "Today's my birthday!" and I just said, "That's great!"

I gave that little girl the ball and her eyes they shined so bright.  
And I think I felt best of all because I knew I'd done right.

*Miss You*

In my life, I've had my share  
of pressure and of fear  
But when I stop and think of you,  
my problems disappear.  
And the only thing I think about  
is that I'm happy but alone.  
And going to the liquor store  
to use the telephone.

So I can hear your voice again  
and maybe make you smile.  
Then I get that funny feeling  
that lasts a little while,  
Until I make my way back home  
and lay back in my bed,  
And think of how much I love you,  
and what I should have said.

### *The Inevitable*

People come all sorts of ways;  
    sizes, shapes and color.  
    Some are real intelligent,  
    some a little duller.  
But each of us will live and die,  
    it's just the only way.  
You can try to make some special deal,  
    but still you just can't stay.

It doesn't matter if you're poor,  
    or if there's much you own;  
    Or if you are real popular,  
    someday you'll stand alone,  
    And face-up to mortality,  
    one day you will be gone,  
Away from all of those you love,  
    it's time that you move on.

So tell your friends, your family,  
    that you love them, so they'll know;  
And try to make just one good friend  
    before it's time to go!

## *Subway*

The subway ride was as exciting  
as the ballgame out at Shea.  
The car was crammed with people,  
it was a holiday.  
There were babies screaming and hooligans,  
a gay couple sat nearby;  
And over by the subway map,  
a girl began to cry.

Laughter came from near the back,  
an old man sat alone.  
A businesswoman wearing black  
played with her telephone.  
It was America in its truest sense,  
every race and face and style.  
Just then the train came to a halt  
and out the herd did file.

But they were replaced by new characters,  
who found seats or grabbed a rail.  
The doors closed tight and down the tracks,  
the train began to sail.

### *Banking Over Bon View School*

We're flying out of Ontario, instead of LAX.  
We couldn't get another flight; our pilot's name  
is Rex.

Control towers and runways, they've got that  
stuff here.

We're rolling into takeoff now;  
they're serving coffee, tea and beer.  
Banking over Bon View School, we can see  
the children swinging.

What a strange place for a school,  
no one can hear them singing.

Going to a noisy school,  
interrupted fifty times a day.

What, a few hundred decibels,  
Ah, the kids will be okay!

'Cause people have got to get to places,  
and they've got to get there fast.

But when you think who's inconvenienced,  
You think about them last!



*Sammy Turned Nine Today*

Listen to music, look at the sky,  
Do something deliberate that won't make you cry.  
Look for distractions,  
Do something that's fun.  
It can lessen your burden by more than a ton.  
So, don't make that appointment,  
The bills don't need paying.  
Go to the park and watch the kids playing,  
And take a deep breath,  
As if it were your last,  
Because life is too short and goes by too fast.

*Nobody Got Shot in School When I Was a Kid*

Why are children shooting children, while they go to school?  
It's not that hard to figure out, can be seen by any fool.  
There's fifty million kids at school, fifty million faces,  
Two hundred million guns at home, not all locked up in their cases.

There's every kind of violent game, movie and TV,  
Desensitizing every kid through what they hear and see.  
And more violence on the TV news, every single night!  
And if you turn the volume down, you can hear your  
neighbors fight!

Every year, there's a million calls to the Child's Protective Service,  
Waitin' on hold for a social worker, is a reason to be nervous!  
Drug abuse is rampant, even the president smoked pot!  
The message that we give to kids, it's okay, but don't get caught.

There's instability in our families, "Do you live with mom or dad?  
What's the name of your day care provider, the last one that  
you had?  
Do I wonder why children are shooting children, like they did at  
Columbine?  
Children are so alienated, I think it's just a sign.

A sign to spend a lot more time, with the kids we've got,  
Heal the wounds, teach tolerance, keep them from getting shot.  
Why are children shooting children? Let's open up our eyes,  
And stop this senseless killing before another child dies!

### *Always Getting Bossed Around*

Always getting bossed around,  
decisions are made for me.  
Never getting to do what I want,  
maybe some day they will see,  
That I'm a person who knows what I want;  
I can make a decision that's right;  
And if left alone to decide for myself,  
I won't always get in a fight.

I wish that my parents trusted me more,  
am I criminal because I'm a teen?  
What if I chose to do something different,  
be part of some other routine?  
They don't know what it's like to be me,  
sometimes I don't think that they care;  
Or maybe they do and it's not their fault  
that life is completely unfair!

*No Looking Back*

I'm not what you'd call a religious man,  
in God I don't believe.  
I'm not going to heaven or hell  
when this world I leave.  
Instead I'll try to do my best  
in the here and now,  
Before my life requires that I  
take a final bow.

And though I must seem a hypocrite,  
I still pay religious dues,  
And send my boys to Sunday School  
in shiny leather shoes,  
Because, though a true belief in God,  
is something that I lack,  
Not everyone desires a life  
where there's no looking back.

*A Hole in My Shoe*

I just don't care about hair and fashion,  
Though some people think that I should.  
I'll spend my money on food and on shelter,  
And maybe a cord of wood.

When the barber asked me how I wanted my hair,  
I said, "Don't make me look like a fool.  
But my time has long passed for you to attempt,  
To try and make me look cool."

That my hair is short and my clothes are clean,  
Is enough status for me to attain.  
When I was much younger, traveling the world,  
I was happy to sleep on the train.

There's enough entertainment in doing a job,  
And making a friend or two.  
I'll have no regrets, when I'm an old man,  
And there is a hole in my shoe!

## *TV Sports*

Are we a shallower breed of man,  
We, who watch television sports,  
Reclining in our naugahyde chairs,  
Wearing only some old boxer shorts?

Are we less valuable than other men,  
Who aspire to do so much more,  
Than just learning the players and their statistics,  
And having a team to root for?

Should we be advancing some political system,  
Or delivering food to the poor,  
Instead of fingering the TV remote,  
In a frenzy to know every score?

Does it really matter who wins the series,  
Or who is the league MVP?  
Maybe it's a sign; I don't know what's important,  
But that stuff really matters to me.

***He Could Pitch***  
*(Dedicated to Jerry Feldman)*

His curve ball was curvin', his sinker was sinkin',  
his fast ball was poppin' the glove,  
As he stood on the mound on that warm afternoon,  
it was more than a game it was love.  
Love for this thing that he'd always done,  
as far back as he could recall;  
Love of the grass and the dirt and the sky,  
love of the bat and the ball.  
And like everyone else, he'd struggled and suffered,  
It didn't matter who was to blame.  
But if he went to the park any day of the week,  
he could always get into a game.  
And find peace in this thing that he did so well,  
you could say that he found his niche.  
And on that summer day, there was only one truth,  
Everyone knew, "He could pitch!"

### ***Buck-up Buddy***

It doesn't matter if you're poor or if you've been  
mistreated,  
Or if your parents are divorced or if you've been  
defeated.

Don't take it out on other people; they're just  
not to blame,  
Even if your circumstances make you feel  
ashamed.

So buck-up buddy, life is hard, maybe harder  
than you thought;  
And overcoming obstacles, the best lesson life  
has taught.  
So quit complaining and overcome that thing  
that's in your way,  
Rather than deflecting responsibility and making  
others pay.



*A Lunchtime Ballgame*

Izzy, Buzzy and Timmy just a waitin' there in line,  
The catcher put a finger down, displayed another sign,  
And as the big man threw the ball, Blacktop Becky began her swing,  
And after she made contact, you could hear that fly ball sing,  
And I've never seen such a happy kid as Becky ran the bases,  
You could see how hard she hit that ball in the children's faces,  
As Blacktop Becky headed home, the throw was on its way,  
Even all the passer-bys for a moment had to stay,  
To see if Becky would be safe or if she would be out,  
And as she hit the pavement those three boys began to shout,  
Izzy, Buzzy and Timmy hollered, "The catcher dropped the ball,  
Becky's safe," the bell rang out, we all headed down the hall.

S. Garber

9-28-11

Revised, 9-24-13

*The Value of Me*

Who are you to determine the value of me,  
When you hardly know me at all,  
Yet, you've developed some elaborate system,  
So that you can make me feel small,

Well, I won't be judged, at least not by you,  
I'm good at some things you don't test,  
And I reject your scores and your labels,  
To fit me in back with the rest,

Because, I will determine the value of me,  
That's something that I get to do,  
So don't size me up with your fancy methods,  
And I won't pass judgment on you.

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2-21-08  
Revised, 11-8-15