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**Ric Masten**  
**Words & one-liners**

We mourn the passing of poet/artist Ric Masten, who was born in Carmel, California, in 1929. In his youth he studied art in Paris, France. Became an oil painter and has had many exhibitions in the United States. Became a songwriter working for Warner Bros. Records in the late 50s. In the 70s & 80s was a well known folksinger. Became interested in poetry and touring extensively over the last thirty five years, reading his poetry in hundreds of colleges and universities in North America, Canada, and England. He recently began illustrating his poetry with single line drawings which he calls "one-liners." He is a well-known conference theme speaker and is a regular on many television and radio talk shows. He lives with his poet-wood carver wife Billie Barbara in the Big Sur mountains of California. He has 17 books to his credit. His most recent book WORDS & ONE-LINERS features many of the drawings you see here. Ric succumbed at last to metastases from his prostate cancer, which he had shared - as his teacher and muse - through poetry and unique, one-line drawings over many years.

Dear all of you Ric Masten people:

Ric's last book, TAKE 3 - Not Dead Yet, arrived in Monterey the day he died. This is available from:

SunInk Publications  
 37931 Palo Colorado Road  
 Carmel, CA 93923  
 Cost: \$30 + \$3 S & H in the US

**Knowing he was in his later years of life, Ric agreed to continue to share his poetry in the IJHC posthumously.**

## THE VANISHING SPECIES



Having close encounters with my own children...

I was born on a planet  
almost seventy seven light years from here

an idyllic world  
where children grew up  
without the threat of nuclear holocaust  
or global warming  
no instant messaging systems  
no black revolutions  
gay revolutions  
drug revolutions  
no woman's liberation  
not even the choice  
of taking or not taking the pill

true  
the seed of all this was there  
but had nothing to do  
with my formative years

and now  
I find myself come to this harsh place  
a kind of space traveler  
having close encounters  
with my own children

like creatures  
from different star systems  
we stare at each other  
across the void  
even our words have different stems

we are aliens in each others midst

but damn it  
I am the one saddled with the memory  
of that other place  
part of a colony  
stranded on planet earth  
at the beginning of the twenty first century  
marooned  
with no way to go back  
and no time to go on

like a moon being eclipsed  
my kind will soon be gone  
and in light of the headlines today  
the sooner the better  
+++

AFTERWORD — I would guess that this one speaks for itself.

Just one comment however — When I see a commercial on TV aimed at the younger set. Wild dancing, gyrating celebrating hordes of young folk having the time of their life in a disco. I turn to the old geezer sitting next to me on the sofa and say: "You know, I would pay a lot of cold hard cash not to have to go to that party!"

## WINESAP



When Snow White is into the apples...

RSVP — and we do respond don't we?  
 gussying up for the grand event  
 the stepsisters  
 dressing and undressing  
 the prince breathing into his hand  
 testing his breath  
 Rapunzel with her fine-tooth comb  
 insecurity  
 working like a worm in a winesap

all that time and attention  
 all that fuss and bother  
 that mirror mirror on the wall business all that  
 just to get past self-doubt  
 and on to the gala affair  
 where above the noise and din  
 someone can shout  
 come on in  
 and name your poison!  
 and we do respond don't we?

the worm turning here  
 to quickly demolish the reflected image  
 that had seemed so important  
 in the glass  
 on the outside of the door  
 the spit and polish dissolving  
 in the glass on the inside  
 till Cinderella is out of her shoes  
 the heir to the throne  
 puking on the floor  
 and coming undone before our eyes  
 Rapunzel  
 really letting her hair down

and don't think you can avoid  
 the transformation  
 by avoiding the drink  
 in situations such as these  
 a non-drinker has a drinking problem too

my abstinence  
 making me appear to you  
 like a grumpy giant  
 a bad-tempered troll  
 my sobriety  
 taken as a clear reflection on present company  
 and when Snow White is into the apples  
 she wants nothing to do with a mirror  
 +++

AFTERWORD — All through my life alcohol has always been a big bugaboo. Never had a problem with addiction myself, as I am too much of an egotist to like the feeling of being out of control. One martini and then water in the glass with an olive for the rest of the evening. But I was raised by an alcoholic mother who, to her credit, did get on the program and was clean and sober for the last 18 years of her life. This didn't help me as a kid growing up however.

My wife was a teetotaler when we married, and I constantly insisted she become a social drinker. She did — and got caught and run down by the booze. When things were totally out of control I realized that I was going to have to quit social drinking if I expected her to stop, which I did — and soon discovered that all of my hard drinking buddies didn't want a sober person present when they were on a toot! In a sense I was shunned.

An interesting side light to Billie Barbara's recent bout with dementia. I am told that more often than not an angry drunk (which Billie was) is an angry Alzheimer's patient - while a loving drunk is a loving Alzheimer's patient. In fact about 6 months ago Billie was having these fits of unreasonable anger mostly at me. That is when we took her to the head doctor who diagnosed her condition and

prescribed two drugs (Aricept and Namenda) and like magic Billie Barbara immediately became her normal loving self. "Better living through chemistry"

But back to the subject at hand -- of course my abstinence was well worth it, as a few months later Billie Barbara got on the AA program. She has been clean and sober for 24 years now. My son has been a drinker and drug user since he was in Junior High, and he is finally at age 50 surfacing. I think this time for sure!!!

.....This poem grew out of the mulch of all these experiences over all these years.

**Perfect 7-23-08**

**By Jerraldine Hildreth Masten Hansen**

That's me Jerri Ric's oldest daughter

Its just a quiet Wednesday  
The 23rd of July  
I hit the speed limit on Friday  
A new year for me but without you  
First the dog died our Sheelah  
And then you Dad  
Lightning struck  
And the fires came  
Blackened our landscape  
Your funeral pier  
It filled my lungs  
Dark brown  
I was afraid  
I kept busy

I pilled your paintings in the car  
Stacked between my favorite rugs  
Irreplaceable  
I carried your ashes  
In my purse for weeks  
Waiting for today  
To put order back  
A quiet Wednesday  
The smoke is clearing  
Today I feel my grief

I empty the car  
And hang your paintings  
One by one  
My memories  
The last one hung is my beginning  
Bixby beach the year I was born

I am hear... Today  
Liked you asked me Dad  
To watch your bones  
Join in the dance of surf and sand  
I think of Joe and Norm  
I keep looking up

To the sky  
To the bridge  
I look ahead  
And behind  
The long path  
I see you  
Carrying me piggy back  
Through this enchanted forest  
You my sturdy steed  
I your princess

Today our last walk together  
I carry you on my back  
Your first born  
I have not walked here  
In all these years  
You have been ill

The path is overgrown  
I feel the sting  
Of so many nettles  
So much is changed  
But I still know my way  
Arms overhead  
I press forward  
With one last push  
I am through  
Out in the light  
The beach is PERFECT  
Someone has left  
A totem of stacked stones  
An island in the middle of the stream  
A place to leave you in honor

I sit and write  
In your favorite sweater and hat  
Your bell  
Your original hippy bell  
Sounds my way  
And...hear you are  
In sand castles  
And 4th of July  
Camp outs

And trout fishing  
 The smell of sea and bacon  
 Turpentine and linseed oil  
 The canvases of my life  
 The happiest times  
 I can remember

I am growing old now  
 And I don't know what to do  
 All these days ahead  
 Without you  
 I AM GREAVING

I rub your ash across my feet  
 And wade into the river  
 Atop a large flat rock  
 Are seven stacked stones  
 I spread you like mortar  
 Between them  
 I beat my chest and scream and wail  
 My tears fill my hands  
 Then to the oceans edge it spills

You seemed so white  
 And then  
 Were swallowed up  
 And disappeared  
 Into kelp and foam

I've held some of you back  
 To leave on the road  
 And the trail home  
 Bread crumbs

My fingers are dusted with white powder  
 I carry you under my nails  
 And between my toes

The sea seemed so loud when I arrived  
 Now it whispers  
 And I am ok  
 And you are ok  
 And its time to go home..

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