

# A Few Words

from Jan Carroll

Autumn 2023



## Road Trip

I vacated the premises after consulting a midwife—  
or was it a fortune teller? A stockbroker? A thief?

But before I left, I raked the dried-up cast-off mistakes  
into a pile, turned and ran toward it, jumping in, again  
and again, trying to hold on to something simple.

I hawked my goods on the fairway  
in the shade of a giant merry-go-round,  
forced to listen to the stupid dumb-downed music  
of the Tilt-a-Whirl on repeat.

I kept arching my back compensating for  
years of hunching over.

Before the stand-up comedian finished his trail  
of thought, I laughed out loud, ticking him off.

I took my odd collection of tentative conclusions  
on tour, shut in a Christmas tin  
on the passenger seat of a beat-up  
borrowed van, lined up a few  
on the counter at lunch  
on Main Street USA—NOT  
the Disney one—but no one took them  
seriously except the forklift operator  
just off the night shift, fingering one  
or two before throwing down some cash  
to cover his bill for caffeine and grub plus a tip,  
mumbling, “I’ve seen this kind of thing before,”  
and, making brief eye contact before pushing off  
adding, “It didn’t go well.”

## Life’s Odd Odessey

Julie Majkowski and I had a wonderful time presenting this event in October at the Brewing Projekt. THANK YOU to everyone who was there to share in the evening. If you would like to watch the one-hour video, go here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5q5SRQL048>. **We ask you not to share the link on social media.** Thank you.

Wishing you a healthy and heart-warming winter holiday season.

### Miles to Go

*Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Miles to go before I sleep. There is no  
frigate like a book to take us lands away.*

Do not go. Gentle into that. Good, night.

Miles Davis to-go before \*I\* sleep, a *Kind of Blue*,  
my own cubist Picasso Blue Period, the artist  
as *l'homme maudit*. No frigate like a book  
of matches that bears the human soul better  
than Miles. To go before. Before I . . .

*Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Miles to go before I sleep. There is no  
frigate like a book to take us lands away.*

Don't go, Gentle, do not go! Not into THAT.

Take a match book, tear out one little cardboard spear  
and strike it on the rough sandpaper strip. Us  
*lands away*. Gentle, into that good. Night  
miles count toward rewards programs, yeah.

Miles on the groove, frigate on the move. Ah . . .

From "Life's Odd Odessey," an attempt to make a "jazz" poem,  
with a recognizable main tune, or "head," and then improvising  
from that. To see Julie and I perform this musical/spoken word  
piece, click on the link on the bottom of page 1 of this newsletter.

*Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Miles to go before I sleep. There is no  
frigate like a book to take us lands away.*

Do not go into that, that not gentle night, not good.

No friggin' book to take us, Miles. Miles *lands*.  
Bears the human soul. That good. Gentle/Not.

Before we sleep, Frigate, take us, you and me, into  
that good, that book, the human soul, the human  
body, good. Miles to go. There is. There IS good.  
There IS . . .

*Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Miles to go before I sleep. There is no  
frigate like a book to take us lands away.*

*Take us lands away . . . Take us lands away . . .*

Chorus is from snippets of "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night," Dylan Thomas; "There Is No Frigate Like a Book," Emily Dickinson; "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Robert Frost.

