



A poet's farewell

Our recently departed, Tom Keene, collected his poems for "Lovemakers, Peacebuilders and Godseekers" in a website that will forever be available to readers. com A sample of his thoughts in poetry follows below. Read more of his poems at: www.tomkeenesmuse.com. *Rest in peace and power, Tom.*

Give me a teacher

Give me a teacher who gives a damn,
needs to know more than my name,
strains for the song I have not sung,
follows me in my ennui
to find my fishing hole.

Give me a teacher who gives a damn,
seduces, surprises,
spades the soil of me,
fertilizes feelings for what is fair,
with anger at what is not,
hope for solutions,
appetite for application.

Give me a teacher who gives a damn,
who tenders truth and trust
more than rules and roles,
favors sticky freedoms
over cool controls,
who risks career and cares
to take a stand for students,
is not unknown to laugh.

I can build you a future in what I am.
when you give me a teacher who gives
a damn.

*July 1986 (appeared in
La Voz Oct. 2016)*

We Farm Workers

We are the ones who connect you to the seeds,
attending them through to harvest:

Cane cutters,
fruit pickers,
planters,
weed pullers,
packers.

Picture us:

Our over and over bending of backs,
our gallons of sweat,
our callusing of hands,
our faces ridden with exhaustion,
our eyes hungry for rest.

Consider how only with us can be:

Your cities,
hospitals,
schools,
sewers
and highways.

Imagine, how with every breakfast bite,
you might grasp the worth of the work we do
and resolve to pay us what our work is worth.

*December 12, 2017
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.*

Homeless

We, with next to nothing,
no place to sleep in safety,
no breakfast on waking,
no power over things,
find one thing that matters:
others like us.

Others who share the
occasional bottle of wine
to ward off the cold,
to partner with for protection,
to share our common trust
in survival for now.

Out of our nothing we share
and we discover among ourselves
the power that comes in feeling
one another's hungry hopes.

June 23, 2016

The pines

Listen to still pines,
Their remembering embrace,
Of their friend, the wind.

April 20, 2001

