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## Worth Their Salt Too

Colleen Whitley

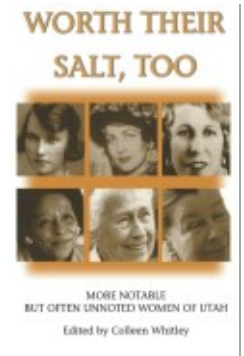
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## EMMA LOU WARNER THAYNE

### On the Side of Life

Cynthia Lampropoulos

*Cynthia Lampropoulos's employment career is highly varied, ranging from hospice director to college instructor. She is also a successful entrepreneur; her current venture is in retail sports equipment. The emphasis of her life, however, is service. She has worked with community councils, parent-teacher organizations, and served on several boards for Ballet West, the Salt Palace Advisory Board, and the Salt Lake Fine Arts Board. She initially interviewed Thayne as part of an assignment for a class in biography, a class which helped her earn a B.A. in English from Brigham Young University. Lampropoulos gratefully acknowledges Thayne's gracious cooperation and assistance with this project. Thayne's inscription on a copy of her book, *How Much for the Earth?*, reveals the bond that grew between the two women: "For Cindy—who is a strong and spiritual influence for gentleness and good"—an observation that could apply to Thayne herself.*

"Like a versatile painter, she does portraits, still life, and landscapes. With words as her paint and her word processor as her brush she captures more than a camera could, that aesthetic quality that appeals to our souls and stirs feelings of warmth and familiarity." These words of tribute are from Emma Lou Warner Thayne's elder brother, Homer Warner. He continues, "The morning after [I had a cataract operation], I awoke to a new world of brighter colors and distinct borders that I couldn't remember ever seeing before. What a beautiful world it is out there and what a blessing it is to be able to see it clearly. And I am thankful for poets like Emma Lou who remind us of the good and the



Emma Lou Thayne speaks, both in meetings and in print, for peace throughout the world. Photo courtesy of Emma Lou Thayne.

beautiful in life in a way we don't get from the newspaper or the ten o'clock news."<sup>1</sup>

In no way is Emma Lou a woman who closes her eyes to political injustice and the anguish of others' misfortunes and deprivations. She has always used her talents to speak out for peace, for humanitarian service, for understanding and generosity. Emma Lou has written, "Out of my life of being loved and encouraged, lavished with kindness and understanding, I could try in telling my stories to make the light as real and moving as [others have] made the dark."<sup>2</sup>

At the 1990 International Citizens' Congress for a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, in the then Soviet Union, three hundred delegates from twenty-three nations gathered in the interest of peace. Testing in the desert of Semipalatinsk, much like the testing in the Nevada desert by the U.S., had been halted thanks in great part to the efforts of a poet-politician there. On the final day of the Citizens' Congress, television crews recorded the session that included only men and, spontaneously, one grey-haired woman from Salt Lake City, Utah.

At the urging of friends from Utah and from hasty notes arising out of sleep the night before, she started her unscheduled talk: "I am a babe in your woods, you scientists, business and government people, makers of films, organizers, understanders of tests and bans and treaties." Mouth dry from nervousness, she asked for a glass of mineral water. Handed a sparkling goblet, she smiled and proposed a toast, "To the Congress. To all of us." Then she continued, "As a writer of paragraphs and poems, as a respondent to your world, I have learned much from all of you . . . but I believe most what newly elected president poet Václav Havel of Czechoslovakia said to standing ovations in a joint session of my American Congress—that our mutual future will depend not so much on politics or even economics as it will on morality . . . It will depend on our connectedness—to each other and to the divine in each of us." To end her talk she read from her peace poems, *How Much for the Earth?*, which had been translated into Russian and German: "I have only one voice, one language / one set of memories to look back on, / a thousand impulses to look ahead / if I will . . . / It's time. It's time we said together / Yes to life. To ashes, simply No." The TV station aired only her talk because, a woman later told her, "it was warm, and you had the eyes of a mother."

“Known as a writer and humanist as well as a poet, Thayne’s words have inspired Utahns and people far from the state for years. *How Much for the Earth?* was translated and released in Russia by the thousands. In the midst of the Cold War, Thayne’s voice, praying, shouting, and crying from the Utah desert, was and remains a source of light, joining still more seekers of peace.”<sup>3</sup>

Born on 22 October 1924 in Salt Lake City, Utah, to a devout Mormon family headed by Homer C. (Pug) and Grace Richards Warner, Emma Lou was one of four children and the only daughter. Her mother and father taught her to understand rules and consequences; at the same time they taught kindness and fun. Her mother, an artist, penned messages in calligraphy to hang conspicuously here and there, such as “The man who lacks responsibility is totally useless” or “Pray at night, plan in the morning.” She praised “the majesty of calm” and taught her children that “you are no better than anyone, but you’re just as good.” Her father, in the automobile business, was also an athlete whose good-humored mottos like “Things work out” and “Try hard, play fair, and have fun” were adopted by Emma Lou. With their mother, “Father,” as the children always called him, watched the tennis matches of his four athletic children, which included his tomboy daughter. On a notepad, he kept track of errors and placements. “But he didn’t show them to us unless we asked, and we knew that win or lose, we would be welcomed after with open arms and ‘you did fine.’” The Warner children knew that they were loved and would be received in any state and in any stage of their lives.

Emma Lou’s mother read to her children, painted, wrote poetry, and tended to an immaculate house—one full of love. Tucked in a lunch sack at school, posted on the refrigerator, or laid on her pillow after a date, Emma Lou often found a humorous “ditty,” her mother’s term for her own verses of encouragement. Emma Lou notes her mother’s abiding influence, but as a young wife, Emma Lou admits she kept her own house “obliquely” as she gravitated to other compelling interests. “She loves to keep house, but both she and the rest of us would have been cheated beyond anything . . . if that was all she ever did.”<sup>4</sup> A friend and colleague, Jane Edwards, noted that Emma Lou had, without a doubt, the most cluttered office she had ever seen. “When I mentioned this to her, she responded: ‘I have a plaque in here

that says “A neat desk is a sign of a sick mind,” but I don’t know where it is.”<sup>5</sup> It was never enough just to stay home and keep house. “It was not that I didn’t respect what she did, but to stay at home being the total homebody, keeping house would never be enough.” When her mother was close to death, Emma Lou wrote:

So now I was losing her, my Grace, my pillar, my soft, soft lady with the lamp. I leaned close to her, concerned that she hear, as she always had, my concern. I’d been a daughter different by far from the one I’d always imagined her wanting—a needle-point, demure daughter more like her than my athletic, involved father. . . . I said, “Mother, I know you’ve always wished I’d take a gentler horse.”

She opened her brown eyes, flashing in dark circled settings, squeezed my hand harder, and said, “No, I’ve always loved you on the wild one.”<sup>6</sup>

Her brothers, close to her in age, Homer three years older, Richard eleven months older, and Gill four years younger, also helped shape her life. “Having all brothers I’ve always been one of the boys,” she jokes. “They don’t intimidate me and I don’t intimidate them.” Homer<sup>7</sup> has become her medical resource, Rick<sup>8</sup> her financial guide, and Gill,<sup>9</sup> her only brother to serve an LDS mission, her spiritual advisor and playmate since her older brothers outgrew her as competitors on the tennis court. Her friend Thomas S. Monson says, “Emma Lou grew up in a family of brothers and had to hold her own with all the boys. She’s very much for fair play and is an advocate for the underdog.”<sup>10</sup> Thayne says of her own upbringing, “I grew up in a household of faith. It was a household that always said, ‘of course.’ ‘Of course’ we saw the good in other people. ‘Of course’ we believed in God and cheered each other on. It was easy to believe in a God who was simply an extension of my mother and father.”<sup>11</sup>

When Emma Lou was four years old, she started kindergarten, but missed her brothers. Richard (Rick) was “clear on the other side of Highland Park School in the first grade. He found me crying on the playground and marched me into his class where he talked the teacher, Miss Lindsay, into letting me stay—as long as I could read the flash

cards. Rick must have been a great salesman, even back then. I did stay, and we went all through school like twins. Really good pals, we were officers together in various schools, we double dated, and we married the same year.”

Even though she was a year younger than most of the others in her grade, Emma Lou’s writing ability surfaced early. For a contest in the fourth grade she wrote a poem about spilling some batter on the kitchen floor while cooking with her mother. Her teacher, Miss Peterson, said she must have copied it somewhere—and gave the prize to another girl’s poem, one that Emma Lou had just read in the *Saturday Evening Post’s* Campbell Kiddies. Disillusioned, she ran off her chagrin on the playground, where she could count on Rick to choose her for his team for whatever they were playing.

She went on to write poems at every turn. At about twelve she lay on her bed at the family cabin and wrote “Adolescence.” Needing independence and finding none, she wrote of her resentment. “I memorized it and was invited to recite it all over town at farewells for missionaries. I’ll never know why. Then I was always on assemblies and writing scripts for this and that.”

At the University of Utah excellent teachers influenced Emma Lou’s writing. “Dr. Harold Folland gave my first freshman English theme a C, and I was used to getting A’s. Shocked, I listened hard as he went on to teach us about things like parallelism and the importance of a thesis statement to ground our logic.” Dr. Louis Zucker, author of *A Jew in Zion*, about his life among the Mormons, was a superb teacher of expository writing.<sup>12</sup> At the same time she learned from Brewster Ghislin, a poet noted for his work on the creative process. Later Dr. Clarice Short would spell out the dictates of form and Dr. William Mulder would inspire her to go for a graduate degree.<sup>13</sup> All helped balance how Emma Lou’s writing would later be tuned.

As a young woman Emma Lou Warner developed the idea that nothing is impossible, a belief she still holds. Graduating from East High School at age sixteen, she had her B.A. by the age of twenty and was needed in 1945 as an instructor of freshman English when twenty thousand men returned to the campus after World War II. Most of her students were older than she was, and in the years since, she has enjoyed them as bankers, doctors, builders, or presidents of boards she would serve on.

Emma Lou went on to fill in at midyear as a teacher at Murray High in 1950. That year she skied over a cliff, fell fifty feet into trees, and broke her back. That same year Diane Hunsaker, who had been her friend since first grade, introduced her to Mel Thayne at his water-skiing business on Pineview Dam. He taught her to water ski wearing a Mae West life jacket to cover up her bulky back brace. She also wore maternity clothes to cover up the brace. He laughs that the reason he married her was because she was so farsighted that she already had a closet full of maternity clothes. He had returned from World War II, graduated from Weber College and Utah State in Logan, Utah. She fell in love with the tall, red-haired, sunburned entrepreneur living in a sheep tent and planning to leave in the fall to do a master's degree in history at Stanford. They were married three months later, and on 27 December 1999 celebrated their fiftieth anniversary.

At Stanford they lived on \$9 a week in a converted motel room with a drop-down bed and a kitchen about four feet square with no oven. "Making cookies on a hot plate was a real trick!" But Emma Lou had cooked for her father and three brothers and managed to help her new six-foot-one husband add 30 pounds to his very thin 140 pounds. Working in the Stanford accounting office, Emma Lou despaired,

On a Minnesota Multitudinal Aptitude Test, I was in the oneth percentile on clerical! Imagine me at the end of a day trying to find where I had lost a nickel! Mel studied. I saw mostly the back of his head. I took my tennis racquet to court, found interesting friends, and wrote freelance articles that were rejected as often as they were accepted. But I had to write. I typed Mel's thesis on Reed Smoot, senator for thirty years from Utah. He claims I turned it into a historical novel, but Smoot was a dull man . . . and Mel wasn't.

The Thaynes returned to Salt Lake City where Mel's brother Bill diverted him from history into teaching and then selling real estate. Three times as young marrieds, Mel and Emma Lou built and moved into new houses. The last one has been their home for more than forty years. Into that home were born five daughters in under ten years, the subject of many of Emma Lou's numerous "family poems."



## Three Forty-Five

## Sonnet to Five Daughters Gone to School

1965

Fly open, door, and let the chaos in!  
 Sweet silence, though delicious, now is stale.  
 The house, too neat, and in its order pale,  
 Resounds with lonely petulance. Begin  
 My life. Floor home, five girls, with brushed embrace,  
 With lengthy resume of great events,  
 With wistful lot of unreserved laments.  
 Fly open, door, to a girlhood's breathy pace.  
 How far the day before that door will close  
 On brides no longer bent on quick return,  
 Whose lives will stretch beyond this childhood womb?  
 My loves, throw wide the door, your zests impose,  
 Immortalize your bubbling, brief sojourn  
 With nearness ringing loud in every room.

## The Coming of Quiet

## To a Home with Five Daughters Gone

1987

I could have declared, would likely believe  
 No day would come when the house all quiet  
 Would suit my heart, that I would not grieve  
 For the crowded rooms, the noisy diet.  
 Admittedly, eloquence sometimes came  
 One voice at a time, and silence crept  
 Light as a bird, the first to proclaim  
 The growing up and out as we slept.  
 But now this passage to silence and spaces  
 Throws up its hands, says, Make up your mind,  
 Choose: the clutch of voices, fingers, and faces?  
 Or unoccupied order? Strangely I find  
 This moment, that, that moment, this,  
 Each transient and lingering as a kiss.<sup>14</sup>

Literary critic Richard H. Cracroft of Brigham Young University once observed, "For one who finds much of her personal identity in her family, writing with skill and control about family is a test of her art—and Thayne passes the test." In "First Loss," one of her finest, "she evokes, at the poem's conclusion, the resonating image of a snowbank angel to convey the twelve-year-old girl's response to the death of her grandmother, with whom she had long shared a bed":

First Loss

My grandma shared her bed with me,  
Till she died when I was twelve.  
We slept with breaths that matched.  
I went to sleep every night restraining  
Deliberately one extra breath in five  
To let her slower time teach mine to wait . . .

She died there when I was twelve.  
I was sleeping, alien, down the hall  
In a harder bed, isolated from the delicate  
Destruction that took its year to take her.  
That night my mother barely touched my hair  
And in stiff, safe mechanics twirled the customary  
Corners of my pillow one by one. "Grandma's gone,"  
She said. Crepuscular against the only light  
Alive behind her in the hall, she somehow left.  
My covers fell like lonely lead on only me  
I lay as if in children's banks of white where  
After a new snow we plopped to stretch and carve

Our shapes like paper dolls along a fold.  
Now, lying on my back, I ran my longest arms  
From hips to head, slow arcs on icy sheets,  
And whispered childhood's chant to the breathless room:  
"Angel, Angel, snowy Angel,  
Spread your wings and fly."<sup>15</sup>

Cracroft admires Thayne for “evading the sentimental, the smug, the self-righteous, and the specious in writing about things intensely personal and familial.”<sup>16</sup>

In those busy years as a young wife and mother, Emma Lou dreamed of having a day between Sunday and Monday that nobody knew of but her. “I had accompaniment wall to wall, most of which I loved. But I needed silence like I needed breathing.” To find this, she stayed up all night once a week. “Luckily I’ve almost always had more energy than time,” she says, “and I could use those delicious eight hours any way I wanted—writing, thinking, reading, freezing raspberry jam, painting a bike for Christmas, finishing furniture. And if I got to bed at a normal time the next night, I was fine.”

In 1968, when her youngest child started school full time, Emma Lou also started school, back to the U of U for a master of arts in creative writing. “Euphoria! To sit in a carrel in the library surrounded by books and with time just to be! It was scary though, being a university student after being a teacher there for all those years.”<sup>17</sup> She wrote her thesis, a collection of poems, under the tutelage of her chairman, Henry Taylor, soon to be a Pulitzer prize winner. It became her first book, *Spaces in the Sage*.<sup>18</sup> Henry Taylor wrote, “Honest and joyful, various in mood and subject, [these poems] respond with generosity and love to a world seen clearly. . . . I enjoy the thought of its giving pleasure to the wider audience it deserves.”<sup>19</sup> Two years later another book of poems was published, *Until Another Day for Butterflies*.<sup>20</sup> Ray Bradbury wrote, “Emma Lou Thayne is full of truths and knows how to get out of the way and let them come out as naturally as seeds pop from a pomegranate. Her voice is needed and welcomed.”<sup>21</sup> A third book of poetry, *On Slim Unaccountable Bones*,<sup>22</sup> was published the next year, and two collections of poetry and prose, *The Family Bond* and *A Woman’s Place*, in 1977.<sup>23</sup> Her first novel *Never Past the Gate*<sup>24</sup> appeared in 1975. In 1995 William Mulder commented on *Never Past the Gate*, describing it as “a story of family adventures centered on their mountain retreat, a cabin that has figured so importantly in the life of Emma Lou and her family. As a writer, teacher, tennis coach, traveler, civic worker, and activist for peace she has moved far beyond the gate. . . . I have seen a provincial poet become ecumenical with global sympathies.”<sup>25</sup>

The most difficult time of her life occurred when her oldest daughter Becky was in college. “Becky was succumbing to and then

reeling back from a disease that few knew anything about”: manic depression, then bulimia and anorexia nervosa.<sup>26</sup> Emma Lou and Mel worried, prayed, and looked for help for their daughter. In finding help for herself, Emma Lou wrote words and Joleen G. Meredith composed the music for a song that has become a standard in Mormon hymns: “Where Can I Turn for Peace?”<sup>27</sup> Years later the mother and daughter collaborated on a book, *Hope and Recovery*, drawn from their letters and diaries. *Kirkus Reviews* noted, “Both are good writers. . . . A consistently engrossing account in which the ups and downs of mental illness in a real family are especially well portrayed.”<sup>28</sup>

As the girls grew older, the family traveled more widely. In 1980 Mel, Emma Lou, and three of their then teenage daughters went to Israel on a tour guided by Lowell Bennion, a longtime teacher at the University of Utah and director of the LDS Institute of Religion there.<sup>29</sup> Emma Lou kept a journal, writing notes as they traveled in the jiggling bus and then at night. Traveling on Salt Lake City time, she would wake at four in the morning and quietly find refuge in the bathtub so as not to disturb anyone. These notes became *Once in Israel*, a book of prose and poetry.<sup>30</sup> In the foreword, Esther Landa, president of the National Council of Jewish Women, observes, “Given Emma Lou Thayne’s background and beliefs, it is no wonder that her first journey to Israel became a lasting spiritual experience. [*Once in Israel* was] no ordinary travelogue, no usual volume of poetry. A rare combination of prose and poetry, it springs from the heart and soul of a woman whose sensitivity to the rhythms of life, to the variegated colors of Israel’s diverse people, to the pull of an ancient land has enabled her to produce a work that rises above history, geography, or theology.”<sup>31</sup>

With the girls grown, Emma Lou expanded her already busy schedule of activities, still writing prolifically, but now doing even more public speaking. She has campaigned for world peace and opposed nuclear weapons testing. Her book of poems *How Much for the Earth?* was selected by the Association for Mormon Letters as the best book of poems in 1986.<sup>32</sup> She recalls the first time an atomic bomb was dropped in her poem “Consideration II.”

In Salt Lake City, the morning of August 6th, 1945, the  
intersection  
of First South and Main steamed under pedestrian traffic.

Streetcars clanked out passengers from their middles,  
 took them up and in on flop-down steps in front. . . .  
 At 10 A.M. on August 6th, 1945, I was walking east,  
 on break from my first full-time job, theoretically in advertising,  
 actually spraying fourteen hundred and  
 thirty-one colors on poster board at Bennett Glass and Paint. . . .  
 Four newsboys  
 I could hear before I got there: "Extra! Extra!  
 Big Bomb Dropped on Japs!: "Extra, Extra! War Over Soon!"  
 "Extra, Extra! New Atom Bomb!" and "Extra, Extra!  
 Hiroshima Bombed!  
 Spells Peace!"<sup>33</sup>

She knew that her brother, Homer, would be coming home from the Pacific, that Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima would go "back to maps / and fiction / with sun instead of Stan and Clint / and Wilbur splashing on their shores."

In "Considering—The End," she writes of another meaning to nuclear weaponry:

I consider only life: The holocaust ahead  
 would leave no one behind  
 to question how we happened not to happen  
 in any moment but our tragic own.<sup>34</sup>

She has continued to campaign for peace as a member of the Steering Committee for Utahns United against Nuclear War since 1982 and as a member of the Board of Advisors for Women Concerned about Nuclear War since 1984.

Another area of concern for her has been the image and lifestyle, real and artificial, of Mormon women. She wrote essays for *Network*, a Salt Lake City women's magazine, and for the now defunct *Utah Holiday* magazine. In 1980 she began writing a column with Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Pulitzer prize-winning historian, who lives in Durham, New Hampshire.<sup>35</sup> The East Meets West column was published in *Exponent II*, a quarterly magazine published by Mormon women in Boston. In 1985 the two collaborated a book, *All God's*

*Critters Got a Place in the Choir*.<sup>36</sup> “The collaboration was done by telephone and fax machine as the writers were separated by ‘two time zones and 2,500 miles.’”<sup>37</sup> The book of personal essays, talks, and poems covers the spectrum of the authors’ adult lives—from young mothers to grandmothers. In *Critters*, as the publisher promises, the authors’ writing reaches across stages, age, decades, moods, persuasions, and a continent, embracing a circle of sisterhood that includes a Siberian Communist and an Old Testament peacemaker, a harried clerk in a fabric store and a neighbor who threatens to drown cats.”<sup>38</sup>

Emma Lou continues to publish essays, monographs, and poems in journals, quarterlies, and anthologies. In 1995 she and Darla Hanks wrote *To Be a Mother, the Agonies and the Ecstasies*, dealing with one of her favorite topics.<sup>39</sup> She has been listed in *A Directory of American Poets* since 1976, *Contemporary Authors* since 1977, and *Who’s Who of Women* since 1979. She is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Mortar Board, and Beehive honorary societies. She has been granted awards ranging from the Panhellenic Woman of the Year (1976) to the David O. McKay Humanities Award from Brigham Young University (1978) to the Distinguished Alumna, University of Utah (1981). Still an avid tennis player, she was nationally ranked number three in the Senior Women’s Doubles in 1980 and twenty in Senior Women’s Singles in 1983.

She has given enormous service to her church and community serving at various times with the Utah Endowment for the Humanities, Utah Arts Council, Lay Advisory Committee for the University of Utah Medical Center’s OB-GYN program, Visiting Poet in the Schools, University of Utah Alumni Board of Directors, as vice-president of the University Alumni Association, on the advisory boards for Pioneer Memorial Theatre, Odyssey House, Utah Arts Council Rural Consortium, Utah State Institute of Fine Arts, and general board of the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association for the LDS Church.

Her humanitarian service has been noted in several ways. In 1991 the YWCA honored her as a Woman of Outstanding Achievement. In 1995 the Salt Lake Community College opened its community services center, modeled after the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center at the University of Utah and named it the Emma Lou Thayne Center for Learning through Service. Thayne said she was “awed and honored [to be] given an honor like this for doing what I love doing.”<sup>40</sup> Two years

later she was given the Madeleine Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts and Humanities. Of these honors she said, "I get embarrassed by this kind of thing. There are so many people who work quietly out of the spotlight. People don't know about them. I wish I could bring up a computer screen that had all the names of people who make such offerings."<sup>41</sup>

In 1996 a metal bar—now saved symbolically in the Thayne home—broke loose from a truck on the freeway and crashed through the windshield of Emma Lou's car, resulting in eight facial fractures and the inability to focus her vision for seven months. During this time, Emma Lou experienced a presence of light. "I had a whole new focus. I learned to listen to an inner music that I'd been too busy to hear." Emma Lou revisits the light to gather strength, strength which she calls "a divine source beyond myself that I get to draw on constantly."<sup>42</sup> Out of this experience has come her most recent volume of poetry, *Things Happen: Poems of Survival*.<sup>43</sup> Of this volume of verse, nationally renowned poet William Stafford has said, "Let me face our times with this book in my hand, for things do happen, the crucial emergencies of every life, and the precious, suddenly illuminated everyday miracles. Reaching out, this book will be your friend—you will not feel alone in a foreign world: in these generous poems there is no foreign world."<sup>44</sup>

### You Heal

One morning you wake  
and everything works  
and almost nothing hurts.  
After seven months  
and the surgery up through  
your mouth, screwed to metal plates  
scars invisible, you even can focus.

After things happen  
you heal. It take its jagged course  
upward and then  
believe it or not,  
so much for it,  
and it is done  
the chance of happening.

Then the heart of not  
figuring a way back  
just happens again  
in the still world  
like rain running the  
skies and green becoming  
the hand of the sun  
with God standing by.<sup>45</sup>

Emma Lou says of her writing, "Each book has been like a companion. When I'm writing a book I feel I'm being given a gift. It's like being on a mission . . . prose is the journey, but poetry is the arrival."<sup>46</sup> Emma Lou Thayne's contributions to the community at large might best be summed up in the words of one friend who said, "To know her is to have a whole new definition of joy," and another who introduced her as "the effective communicator and healer, whose spirit of love and acceptance and her cockeyed optimism has fostered the cause of peace and understanding among communities whose diversities range from religion to lifestyles."<sup>47</sup> Emma Lou's joyous outlook on life is found in all of her poetry, but it is the advice she gives to all who seek to know the same that best reflects the contribution she makes.

#### Lesson #1

Ski here, my child, not on gentle slopes  
where the snow is packed and the trail is wide.  
Instead cut through the trees where no one's tried  
the powder. Push toward the hill and rotate  
as you rise. No, the snow-plow holds you back;  
it's slow and makes you frightened of your turn.  
Think parallel. Stay all in one, then learn  
to ski the fall line, always down: Switchback  
skiers in their caution never know how  
dropping with the mountain keeps the balance  
right and rhythm smooth. Don't watch your tips at  
all. Look past them at the deep white snow,  
virgin as light, and yours. Just bend, release:  
You, gravity and white will make our peace.<sup>48</sup>



