

ANN ELIZABETH CARSON

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Ann Elizabeth Carson, psychotherapist, poet, writer and artist was born in 1929 in Toronto, Ontario, the third generation daughter of a family rooted in small town Ontario, and later in depression-torn Toronto. Ann was educated at public schools in Toronto and earned a B.A.(Hons) at the University of Toronto in 1951

After twenty-two years as a lawyer's wife, mother of four children and volunteer developing programs for various cultural and social service organizations Ann decided it was time for a change and applied for a scholarship to graduate school. She earned a Master's in Adult Education and Counselling at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Toronto in 1970, and then worked for the Ontario government in their substance abuse program and in developing the first employee assistance program in the province. Having had her fill of working within government's restraints she exchanged bureaucracies and became a counsellor and group leader at York University's Counselling and Development Centre where she supervised graduate students doing a practicum in clinical psychology and co-developed York's employee assistance program with the Department of Human Resources. As well, she taught adult learning theory for " The Ulyssean Adult", a course she designed to meet the needs of mature students returning to the university.

Having helped other people get their advanced graduate degrees for fifteen years, Ann took a leave of absence from York, returned to graduate studies herself, became a landlady, and opened a private practice in psychotherapy and family counselling. Combined with graduate studies, she explored art as a therapeutic discipline with Regine Kurek in her two year course at Arscura Art School, and expanded her private practice to include various forms of expressive therapies.

Inspired by her clients work, Ann took her own creativity more seriously and devoted regular attention to her writing, both poetry and prose, and to her work with clay and water colour. Finding she could not do it all, Ann retired from both York and graduate school, and devoted herself to private practice, sculpture and writing.

Ann took a sabbatical from private practice to publish her first book, *Shadows Light*, a collection of early and new poems, illustrated with colour photographs of her sculptures. This collection has been reviewed by Jan Bailey, American poet, as "confronting the silences; through poignant images grounded in daily life we fall wholly into uncensored emotion." Selections and/or reviews of *Shadows Light* have appeared in publications from Maine to Northern Ontario, in Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa..

In the autumn of 2006 Ann published *My Grandmother's Hair*, a social memoir in poetry, visual images and myth of how we are molded by family and social contexts, highlighting the uses and abuses of power in intimate and public places. "A moving multigenerational and multigenre autobiography, it offers a view of life cycles in epic survey, and in the detail of a moment." (Toronto Women's Book Store). Ann's readings from *My Grandmother's Hair* are a multimedia presentation: spoken word accompanied by projected images of her drawings, paintings and sculptures. She has just completed *We All Become Stories:creating memory*, twelve profiles of older people recounting the changing experience of memory over their life times.

Ann maintains a part time private practice in individual psychotherapy and couple counselling with special interests in expressive therapies, life-stage transitions, aging, memory and brain plasticity. Her experience with several debilitating chronic illnesses has made her sensitive to the individual, familial and work related areas of concern which patients and their families must deal with and alerted her to alternative and community resources for health care. As an older person Ann brings both personal experience and professional expertise to helping older people and their families re-define our meanings of health, of the aging process and of being elderly so that they can discuss immanent changes in the elderly person's life style, and the impact on the family, and examine alternatives until a consensus is reached about a comfortable solution.

Ann reads from her books at various venues, leads workshops in how art, movement and writing broaden our perspective, participates in a study group on international affairs, two book clubs and the work of the Older Women's Network. She continues to sculpt and paint, is writing a second book of poetry and keeps fit with circuit training, rebounding and walks on the Beaches boardwalk.