



# *Outlive Me*

Thirty Years of Poems and Writings

ARNIE GOLDMAN

# Contents

Intro and Acknowledgements xi

## *One* Classroom

Classroom 2  
Camouflage 4  
Nightmare with Shoes 5  
Yearbook 6  
Hands 8  
Thanksgiving 9  
Hunger 10  
Old Man Yellow 16  
For You (on your 21st birthday) 17  
The Recoil 18  
A Bad Poem 19  
Reflections on a New Year Casualty 20  
pieces 21  
Blurred Vision 22

## *Two* Ghosts of the Fathers

After The Fact 32  
Rings 33  
Card-players 34  
Waking in the Jewish Home for the Aged 36  
On Your Birthday 38  
The Echoes Of The Dead 39  
Empty Chairs 40

## *Three* Pass Away

Extranjero 44  
Passing 46  
Saturday Night, From a Chair on the Porch 47  
Last Call 48  
Blood-Breath 49

Snapshots 51  
Lines 53  
Pass Away 55  
Mother 58  
Echo 59  
Twenty One 60

*Four* One Year Into Another

One Year 66  
Wednesday 68  
Kenny's Song 70  
Severance 73  
Breath 75  
To the Goldmans 78  
Forgetting My Uncle 82  
Championships 85  
Summer's Bookends 88

*Five* Anniversaries

Journal Pieces 1992-2002 94  
In Memory of Kenny Goldman 101  
the dead come crawling 103  
Tumor 104  
Tax Season 108  
Apart 111  
Anniversary Song 114

*Six* Permanent

My First Love 118  
Crack 129  
Burnout 132  
Out of the Closet 134  
Down 142  
Groomsman 145  
Outlive Me 149  
Permanent 151  
Namesake 154



## Intro and Acknowledgements

Regret. When someone asks if you regret anything about your life, you're supposed to say no; I would do it the same way if I had to do it over again. At least that's what you hear on TV interviews.

Unlike all of the satisfied people, I've had lots of regrets. I regret how little I've written since college. I didn't have the guts to write much, I didn't seek any feedback, nor did I send anything away for publication. I've been a "closet writer," periodically writing a poem, article, story, speech, or eulogy and rarely letting anyone read or hear what I'd written.

I graduated from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan in 1979, a college I attended because I received a full scholarship, I was afraid to go away to school, and because my best friend also got a scholarship and decided to go to Wayne. When I was deciding what I wanted to do with my life, I looked at natural health, chiropractic, and medicine, being a full-fledged vegetarian health fanatic at the time. I hated pre-med classes and loved writing classes, so I suddenly made up my mind that I didn't know what I was going to be in life

but I knew damn well I wasn't going to be a doctor. I wrote poetry and short stories and won the only writing contest I ever entered, the Tompkins Award at Wayne State. I graduated with a double major in English and Psychology and was a Merit Scholar and Phi Beta Kappa as well. In other words, I couldn't find a job. I stopped trying after walking out of the K Mart headquarters in 1979 and I never interviewed again. Instead, I stayed at my dad's business, Hardware Sales and Supply, where I had been working part time. I knew that one day I would get a "real job." Hardware Sales and Supply eventually became IDN-Hardware Sales, Inc. and in the years that followed I started caring about this company and its people. I wanted to help my father make the company better and so I stayed and eventually became its President. The company grew from seven people in 1979 to eighty-five people and ten locations today. But still, I ask myself, What am I going to do with my life?

What's the point of regret, because you can't go back and change anything. Still, there are real regrets. I regret that my best friend, Lewis Stone, didn't stop me in fifth grade from accidentally pounding Marty Adelman's head on the desk when the teacher was out, breaking his front tooth in half. Lewis, when he was in sixth grade, died in his sleep of a brain aneurism. I regret that I lived the cozy life and sacrificed my true passion, writing, to make a living purchasing and selling locks and security hardware in my father's business. I regret that I never tried to be a "real writer" because I never felt good enough to do it. I regret that I never got to meet my grandmother, Anna, whom I was named after and regret that she lived in a mental institution the last sixteen years of her life. I regret 9/11/2001, the day after my mother's sixty-sixth birthday. I regret the loss of so many I loved who died too early, like Aunt Shirley, my dad's youngest sister, who committed suicide in her bathroom in her Pacific Palisades home in California, and my cousin, Mike, my other Aunt Shirley's youngest son, who died mysteriously before he was 40, in his small suburban home. I regret that I sold the two Super Bowl tickets I'd been given in

1982 after a three hour icy car ride with my brother, Kenny, who was 13, (I was 25.) And how can I not regret the devastating night after a Detroit Tigers' baseball game on a hot July night seven months later when my father's car was blind-sided by another car and Kenny lived for only a few hours more, dying after midnight.

Twenty-three years later I realize I have many reasons to give thanks. I am thankful I am finally producing a book of writing, even if it is read by only family and friends. I am thankful for my parents, Milt and Rochelle, who let me be whatever I decided to be without pushing. They would have supported me whether I became a starving poet or a successful doctor or just an order picker at Hardware Sales. I am thankful to have worked alongside my father, whether yelling at each other or hugging, as long as I did. I am thankful for my gifted and loving sister, Leslie, and her dedicated husband, Bruce, and their wonderful daughter, Karennia. I am thankful for the few years I was blessed to have a brother like Kenny who inspired me with his humor, his love of fun and sports, and his friendship.

I am especially thankful for my wife, Judy, who saved me from myself in 1984, two years after Kenny died. She has given me so much over the years, which only she and I share. She and her parents and siblings have filled a lot of emptiness over the years. And she has been a loving mother to our three fantastic children, Kyle, Ilana, and Marlee, who have been amazing to watch as they've grown from little breathing bodies to the people they are today. I want to thank all of them for helping me to be the person I am and the writer that I want to be.

I want to donate all proceeds from this book to four charitable institutions:

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, which for 20 years has been building awareness and raising \$750 million for innovative breast cancer research and community outreach programs.

The Rainbow Connection, which is a Michigan non-profit organization established in 1985 that grants wishes to children, 3-18 years

old, who have been diagnosed with life threatening diseases.

The Kenny Goldman Athletic Fund, established and named for my brother, which teaches children the spirit and techniques of basketball and allows kids to participate in a high quality basketball league.

And last but not least, JARC, which is a non-sectarian, community-based, Jewish residential service in Southeastern Michigan whose mission is to enable people with disabilities to lead full, rich lives.

I hope that readers will take away something meaningful from my book of poetry and writings, and that we can help raise needed funds for these important charitable organizations.

Arnie Goldman

2005



## Classroom

1976

Eighteen people in a circle,  
low-pitched voices filtered  
by the constant rumble, the hissing  
of the heat—but it's still cold

in the streets out there,  
beyond the chilled glass,  
that market-stockyard planet  
sitting, stuffed and slouching,

with darkened hands too stiff  
to shake. And it's cold inside,  
in this half-lit space  
they call a classroom:

cracked-white walls surrounding us,  
concrete slabs above our heads.  
Withdrawn, almost patiently we sit,  
await directions, maps that lead us

from one door to another, lecture  
to test, distant voice to distant voice.  
So we hide amongst the strangers  
that we are. We tick in cadence

with the clock, slowly,  
constantly, yet unaware of time.  
The air drizzles down upon us  
but we can hardly breathe

without fear, without useless  
inhibitions. We talk in poems—  
masquerades in rhymes, foreign words—  
splices of silence in between,

afraid to lose ourselves  
in each other's hands,  
each impenetrable eye.  
We choose to remain immune.

**H**OW MANY PEOPLE LIVE LIFE IN A DAILY FOG? How easy is it to succumb, to “make a living,” go out with friends, get married, have children, and escape in our minds? Looking backward, we realize that we survived the daily struggles at work, the forgetting of each day with TV, food, and drink. Some of us want to write about our lives, the people we love, the world we experience, but give up trying, until it’s too late.

Arnie Goldman is a part-time poet and writer who went to work part-time for his father during college and stayed at the same company for 27 years. After his father retired in 1994, Arnie became CEO of IDN-Hardware Sales, Inc., a distributor of door and security hardware, which now has ten locations in five states and 85 employees.

Arnie calls himself a “closet writer” and has written a few poems, essays, and stories since college. He has never published anything until now. This collection of his poems and writings spans 30 years from 1976 through 2005. It captures the passage of time, from school to marriage to parenthood to middle age. The poems and writings speak about love, fear, work, wonder, death, loss, and gratitude.



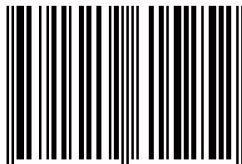
All proceeds from the sale of *Outlive Me* will be split  
between four charity organizations:

**The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation,  
The Rainbow Connection, The Kenny Goldman Athletic  
Fund of the JCC Detroit, and JARC**

US \$13.95

Cover photograph by Mark Sanders  
[www.outliveme.com](http://www.outliveme.com)

ISBN 1-4196-1525-4



9 781419 615252