

PART THREE:

ONE FAMILY'S JOURNEY THROUGH GRATITUDE

43 YEARS OF PERSONAL POEMS OF
THANKS-GIVING FROM 1972 TO 2014



1972



First two children . . . living and working in our first job after graduate school, founding a political and management consulting firm in Washington, DC.

Simple Thanksgiving

We give thanks on this day
for our family
and for each of our precious friends.

No other treasure parallels the value
of a true friendship
because relationships are the prime source
of eternal joy.

The contribution that you
and each other friend and family member
has made in our lives
cannot be measured or even contemplated.
We only know that we face each day
with greater confidence
knowing that your love and loyalty sustains us.

We are deeply grateful to a loving Heavenly Father
Who has brought you into our lives,
and us into yours.
May He be as generous to you
and to those dear to you
as He has been to . . .

Rick and Linda Eyre and girls



*Two parents and two
kids—all even, but
not for long.*



Relationships

Our thanks-giving on this special day
is for you . . .

because among God's many blessings,
it is our relationships with family and friends
that endure, fulfill, and form the substance
of which joy is made.

Indeed, a life void of all relationships
would have nothing left . . .
(except the potential
to create new relationships).

Our thanks-giving is to you
because
the touching
of your life and ours
has made our hearts smile,
and taught us the strength and confidence
that comes from loving and from being loved.

May the year ahead, for you, be one of
goals accomplished . . . and of serendipity
(happy surprises, unexpected joys).

Richard, Linda, Saren, Shawni, and ?





*Six of us now, and living in the
Autumn Rocky Mountains.*

Thanks-Giving for Joy

We have always felt glad
that Thanksgiving precedes Christmas,
because in life, gratitude precedes joy.

Each year, in our family, it seems that joy expands
in proportion to the many things
for which we give thanks.

In this world, and particularly in this season,
the branches and boughs of experience
are so often heavy with the blossoms of happiness,
and yet we know that the roots of joy are family and friends.

And so, on this special day,
for what you have given us,
and for what He has given us,
we give thanks,
and love,
and joy.

Love, the Eyres



Late Autumn Transitions



late autumn's transitions:
leaves to bare limbs,
grass to snow,
the external warm of summer just passed
to the internal warm of Christmas just ahead . . .

also a transition of time . . .
a year ends,
a short era concludes.
transitions are times of reflection and of plans . . .
of looking over-the-shoulder-back
and over-the-horizon-forward.

for us, today, the reflecting-back
yields the swelling joy of thanks-giving . . .
the bursting gratitude
for health, for gifts, for opportunities,
and most of all (after all) for friends and family . . .
for you who make up our world . . . you whose touch,
once felt by our lives,
can never really un-touch . . .
though both time and people move.

for us, today, the looking forward
is a prayer . . .
may God grant you a joyous holiday season
and a year of progress, contribution and love.
may He grant us the same . . . and a continued chance
to cross our lives with yours.

the eyres / richard, linda, saren, shawni, joshua, saydria





*Relocated in London,
abandoning political
aspiration for Church
calling.*

Family, Friends, and Missionaries



family and friends are for sharing . . .
and for thanking . . .
and for sharing Thanksgiving and thanks-giving with.

this Thanksgiving we give thanks
to a wise and loving Heavenly Father
. for a sensational new little son and for the miracles
and blessings and growth that surrounded his birth,
. for the joy and unfolding individuality
of five precious children,
. for 200 young missionaries who fit into our lives
somewhere between brothers and sons,
sisters and daughters,
. for the beauty and peace we feel in our lives,
. and for having you to share it with.

this Thanksgiving we share with you the joy we feel . . .
through neck-level involvement in a worthy cause . . .
through learning and loving a new country so old . . .
through observing with a close-up lens
the positive alteration of lives . . .
through knowing you care and think of us once in a while.

love,

*richard, linda, saren, shawni, josh, saydi, and new little jonah
eyre*

British Thanksgiving



We give thanks for life,
for joy,
for opportunities to serve, and for
the freedom-loving, God-fearing lands
of England and America.

People try to tell us that there is no
Thanksgiving day in Great Britain.
But there is . . .

Every day, in our hearts, for you,
our friends and family
who make life bright and warm,
sure and mellow.

Our hearts are in two places today . . .
Here, with those whom we serve,
and there, with you whom we miss,
and love.

May the Lord bless and keep you,
and may joy find you as frequently
as it finds the Eyres.

We give thanks



Seven of us now, becoming more British every day.

Gratitude is Joy, Joy is Gratitude

Question:

Does "Joy" (the deepest happiness)
have many sources? . . . or only one?

You might think of many . . . but they might all boil down
(or at least relate)
to one.

And that one would be gratitude.

Gratitude is joy. Joy is gratitude. Thus Thanksgiving is the happiest time.

This Thanksgiving
we are strengthened by the squared scaffolding
of young missionaries who are stretched straight and pulled pure
by the challenge of working only for a cause.

The fact that this is our third of three British Thanksgivings
stirs and prickles our emotions . . . so that
just as the pleasure of rejoining some loved ones comes close,
the pain of leaving other, newer loves looms large
and so we move up life's path . . . accepting both kinds of joy.

· Richard · Linda · Saren (8) · Shawni (6) · Joshua (4) · Saydi (3) ·
Jonah (1) and ? (Feb. 1979)

1978

Thanks-Giving for Joy

Like Pilgrims,
from England to America we've come.

Like Pilgrims, thankful for the freedoms
and joys of this new country,
but missing mightily
the green and pleasant land behind.

Like Pilgrims, thankful
to a gracious God for a growing
family of children, whose presence
is peace,
whose light teaches joy.

Thankful to think of Him not just
as a force, a creator . . . but as a Father . . .
thus to think of you,
our most valued possessions,
not just as friends,
but as brothers, sisters.

Like Pilgrims, embarking on
new adventures,
secure in your friendship,
anxious for you to be secure in ours.

*Richard, Linda, Saren (9), Shawni (7),
Joshua (5), Saydi (4), Jonah (2), and
Talmadge (9 mo.).*

1979

1980



The Harmony of the Harvest

Thanksgiving again . . .
so much the same, so much different.

We are thanks-giving
for the harmony of the harvest,
for the rhythms and cadences of life's rich experience,
for the alternating, peaceful strains
and dynamic crescendos of our young family,
including the new virtuoso soloist
who fills the room and makes us feel
more like a whole orchestra than mere chamber music.

. . . and for you, our family and friends,
so involved in the melodies of our life.
We are thanks-giving again, but it never grows old,
nor does our love for you, or your song's harmony with ours.

May the coming season, and the fresh new year to follow,
be filled with music, both for ear and soul . . .
life-music,
in-tune
with He who orchestrates all things,
with He to whom we give thanks.

The Eyres

Thanks to the Peaceable Author of Light

We give thanks!
For a higher realm that we are seeking and finding,
finding and seeking. . . .
A realm of light,
above the flesh and schemes and ruts of man,
A realm of truth and tears, flashes and fears,
Yearnings and years,
A realm we find in our quietest moments
surrounded with the soft sureness
that after the tumult and shouting dies, after the over-rated
successes and failures slide away,
it is you, our family and friends that matter, that continue,
and that go with freedom and faith as the 4 ingredients of joy.
We thank the peaceable author of light
whose spirit speaks its sweetest sermon to ours
in silent, simple moments when we wait.
He tells us then, that our love for you is love for Him . . .
and that
Thanksgiving is Joy.

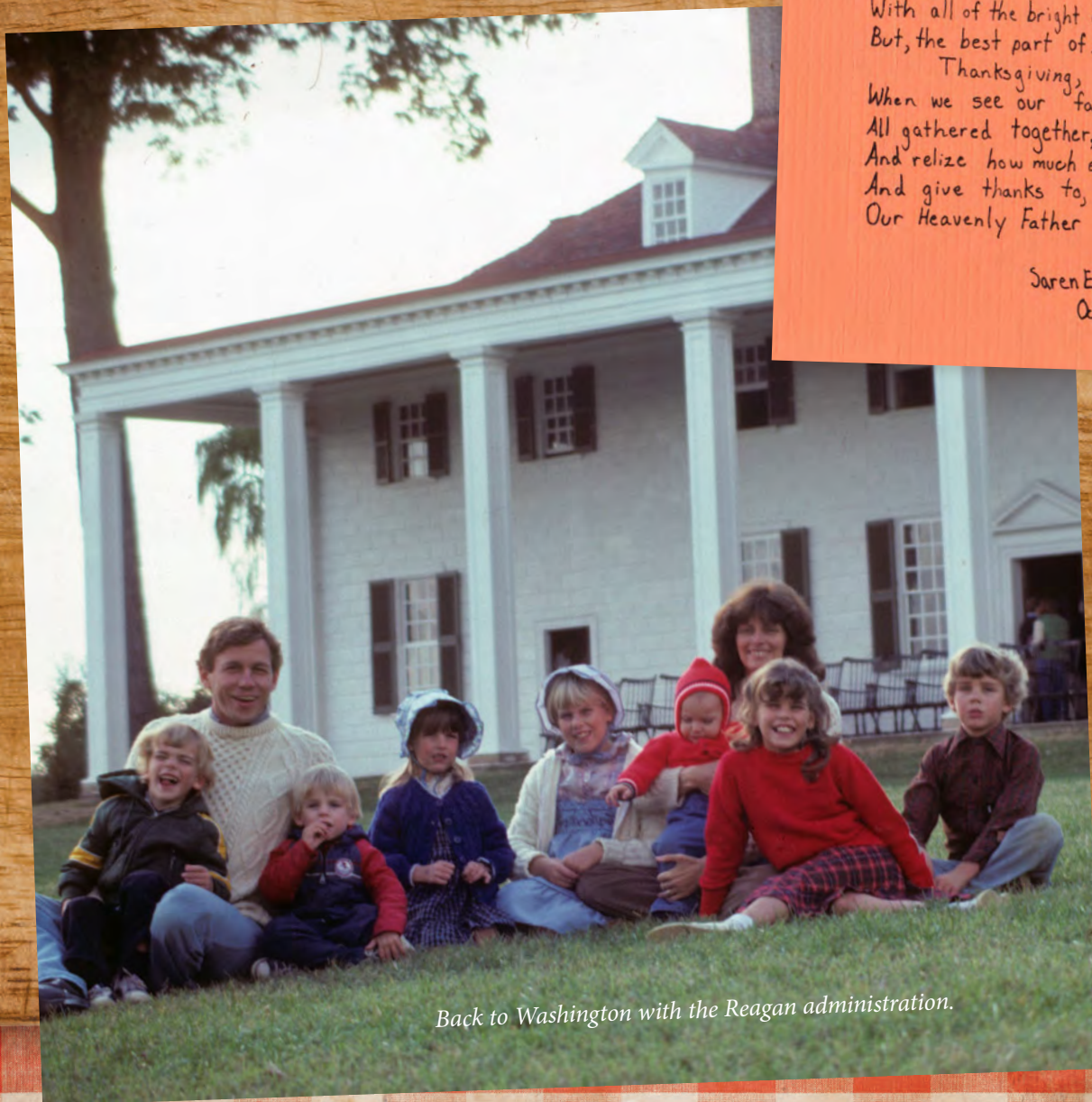
THE EYRES, Richard, Linda, Saren (11), Shawni (9), Josh (7), Saydi (6), Jonah (4), Talmadge (2), & Noah (1)

1981

Thanksgiving

I Love Autumn,
Not too hot, not too cold,
With all of beautiful leaves,
And so full of fun days.
There's Halloween, with Jack-o-lanterns,
Witches, and goblins.
Autumn is harvest time,
With all of the bright colored leaves.
But, the best part of Autumn is,
Thanksgiving,
When we see our family,
All gathered together,
And realize how much each one means,
And give thanks to,
Our Heavenly Father

Saren Eyre age: 11
Oct. 28, 1981



Back to Washington with the Reagan administration.

*Moving back to the West and
starting Joy Schools.*

1982



Families Unfold like Flowers

families unfold like flowers,
revealing new wonders, unexpected gifts
and diversity!
we give thanks for the new present, previously the future
which pushes now to then in its wake,
and wakes us
through the noise of growth and blossoming,
especially among our children.
and we give thanks for the constants among the change . . .
for the love and loyalty of family and friends . . .
for you!
thanksgiving signals the season of
free-flow feelings, warmth and joy,
but also melancholy, and memories,
some longings for other golden moments and for some of you,
too long away from our lives.
a little fear even, of the speed of time
and sadness in not being part of some of your changes.
but mostly, time carries new joy on its waves,
joy made of experience, challenge, surprise . . .
and of thanks-giving . . .
for a world where hope still outweighs hate,
for God-given knowledge of priorities, for the blessing
of “choosing the better part,” and for
fellow travelers like you who share that choice
of faith and freedom, friends and families.
and through all the change and challenge, all the growth and gifts
the bottom line is
we love you!

The Eyres

The Harmony of the Harvest

For us,
Thanksgiving is a time to reflect
and realize. And “realize” or “real eyes,” is a synonym
for Thanksgiving.

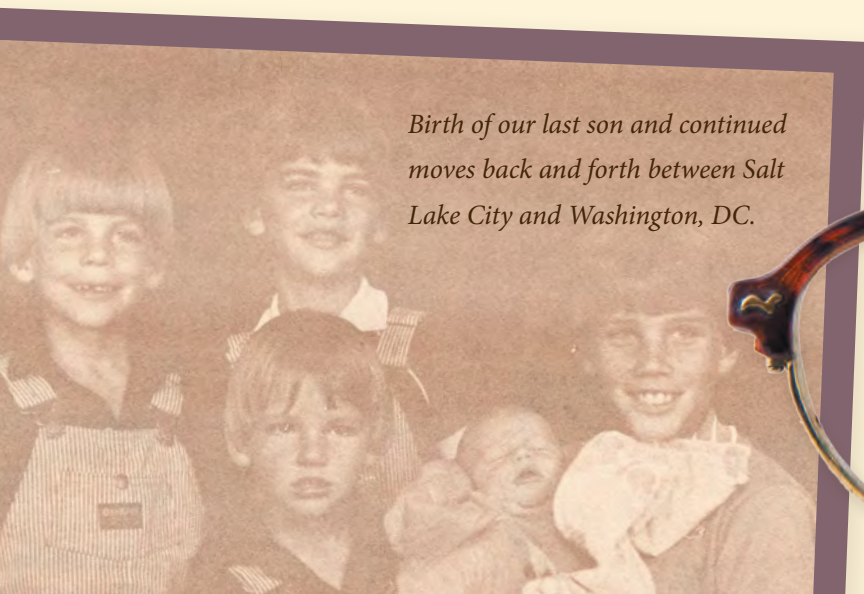
Our new year is not January but
September . . . the new school year.
And between its hustle and the Christmas bustle
comes a quieter moment,
in leafless November,
a time to look front and back,
to ponder and plan, to be grateful,
and to real eyes what matters.

The “desperate haste to succeed in
such desperate enterprises”
that Thoreau observed
has further fused in our day,
and we think too much in terms
of getting there, getting done, getting ahead,
getting . . .

and too little about the joy of the journey,
too little about real eyes ing.
In this scrambled, scrambling,
left-brain world, our eyes see the worries,
the ambitions and the tasks of the day.
But we have other eyes!
And when they see, what they see
is more real than the illusions on our retina.

At Thanksgiving, we try to see with
real eyes . . . to realize the awe of
A new baby . . . realize the joy of giving and serving
. . . realize the love we feel for you,
for family and friends, and for God
who gave you to us.
Such are the real eyes of Thanksgiving!

*The Eye-ers: Linda, Richard, Saren, Shawni, Josh, Saydi,
Jonah, Talmadge, Noah, and Eli*



*Birth of our last son and continued
moves back and forth between Salt
Lake City and Washington, DC.*



Books Pass through Our Lives

Books pass through our lives,
leaving traces, impressions, bringing to us the
perspectives of other people,
other places, other pastimes.

But more important than the books passing through our lives
are the lives that pass through our book.
People enter the book of our family
and move amongst its pages,
making memories, leaving love,
extending experience, enlarging expectations,
even expanding excitement.

You,
our family and friends,
warm the chapters of our book,
shaping a story that would otherwise be
short and shallow.
As we turn through the seasons of our book,
writing the chapters of our lives,
we acknowledge God who gave us paper and quill
and who, by including you,
made it a book of Thanksgiving.

*Richard, Linda, Saren (14) Shawni (12) Joshua (10) Saydi (9) Jonah
(7) Talmadge (5) Noah (4) Eli (1) EYRE*



More travel, more speaking, and publishing our tenth book.



Thanksgiving, Lifebalance, and the Eyrealm

Driving through flurrying, fast-flying, yellow leaves,
low, late-Autumn sunshine slanting sideways
under higher clouds, slate colored and moving.
We stop, alone amidst the bright motion, top down
to catch the spinners and listen to the swirlers
and think while we watch it all change.

Thanksgivings come so often now,
and life's busyness is both blessing and bother.
We would trade away little that we pursue,
and no one that we love,
yet we long for more simple solitude
and we look for ways to balance the priorities of
children . . . career . . . church,
of service and self—
to balance outer ambition with inner submission
and to bring our doing and our getting
into harmony with our being.

We look, each of us in our own way, for a higher realm
which balances structure with spontaneity,
schedules with serendipity.

We look for this balance amidst the change
which is the only constant
other than the sustaining love we feel from you,
our family and friends.

And we realize, in glimpses that blow past like golden leaves,
that change is the Eyrealm
and that Lifebalance is love.

We wish we saw you more, that our minds could meet
on change and other joys,
but at least our Thanksgiving reaches out far toward you—
mending memories, dividing distances,
and shrinking separation into a temporary disorder
which can be partially put right simply by saying
we love you!

Eyrealm



*Shifting from Life
Planning to Life
Balance, building
cabin in woods.*



Wondrous Waves of Pure Gratitude

Gratitude is a gift and an art
mastered by few.

We remember our Swedish immigrant Grandmother in whom
thanksgiving would well up
to teary overflow
each time she prayed.

Some said it was because the contrasts remained so vivid
between how little she had there
and how much she had here.
Gratitude's opposites (and the norm for most) are
"wanting more" and
"taking for granted."

It is said (and it is sad) that, to really live you must almost die
and occasionally

we have a close call, a near miss, a "scary almost"
and, for a moment, we are filled, overwhelmed, refreshed
by penetrating, wondrous waves of pure gratitude.

But the intensity and the joy of those feelings dim and diminish
as soon as life returns to numb normal.

How do we make Thanksgiving a verb in our lives
instead of a noun on our calendars?

How do we make the intensity of our gratitude for what we keep match
the intensity of the grief we feel for what we lose?

How do we take nothing for granted and take everything for gratitude?

How do we feel the joy now instead of looking back with melancholy
when it is gone?

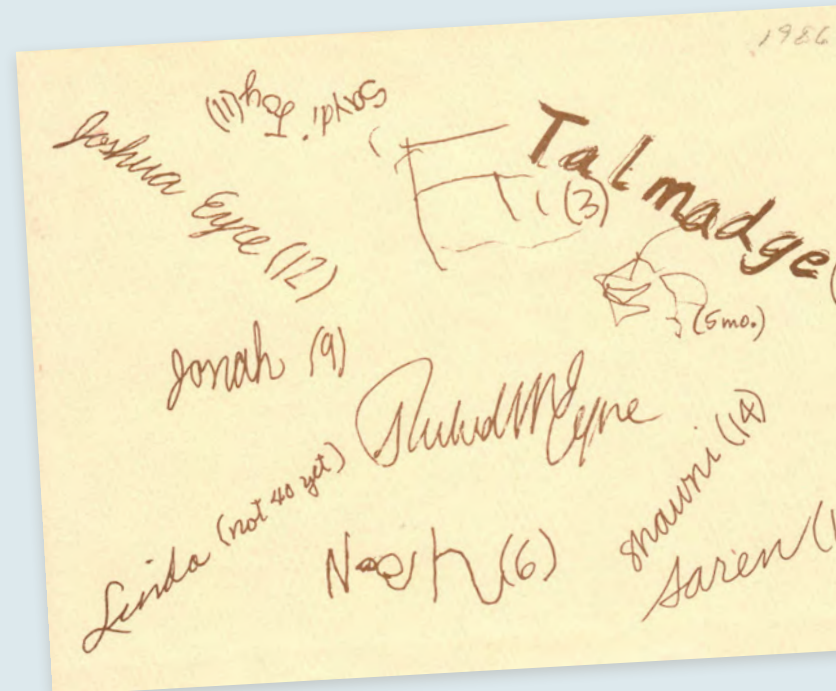
Thanksgiving is a time to try

A time to count the blessings and even imagine
the grief we would feel with their loss.



So we share this gratitude,
And we ask Him
to sharpen it in our souls, to heat it and hone it in our hearts.

*Richard, Linda, Saren, Shawni, Joshua, Saydi, Jonah,
Talmadge, Noah, Eli and (as of June 12) Charity Jade Eyre*



*Our last daughter and last child arrives.
All nine at home.*

Never Tack when You Can Jibe

1987

Some sailors say

“Never tack when you can jibe!”

Turn with the wind instead of into it . . . and
know thanksgiving for both breeze and sail.

Enjoy the force and power and ride the speed, cautious only
to keep control.

1987 was a year of joyous jibes for Eyrealm,
navigated in England,
where we wrote and watched, wandered and wondered
with the children,
reveling in their rediscovery of each other, and our rediscovery of our roots.
We focused on four ships that sailed
from Liverpool, Southampton, Stockholm, and Copenhagen,
bearing the bearers of the Eyre, Jacobson, Swenson, and Clark names—
the four corners of our family tree . . .
the four bearers who made right-angle jibes,
leaving the countries, cultures, and churches
of all past ancestral levels,
starting a new chapter—even a new book—for all of us who followed.

You and we are sailors on the same ship . . .
the category of people who make us what we are;
to whom we owe ourselves,
and for whom we feel a love too deep to be fully expressed.
For you, friends and family, for you who are us,
we give thanks,
and we pilot through life's forward jibes with you as the wind in our sails.

Love: RICHARD, LINDA, SAREN (17) SHAWNI
(15) JOSHUA (13) SAYDRIA (12) JONAH (10)
TALMADGE (8) NOAH (7) ELI (4) CHARITY (1)
*Not to mention Banner (the horse) Esmerelda (the
dog) Geneva (the cat) Brumbie (the bird) Buba (the
turtle) Cosette (the bunny) Bill (the gerbil)*

Another year in England with all nine to write and to look for roots.





A sort of serendipity-of-spirit that makes
Interruptions interesting and turns obstacles into opportunities.
One also needs the unmoving islands of friends and family.

We give thanks
To the designer of this whole wonderfully random place and plan.
We give thanks for you!
We love this season of Thanks Giving which warms us
And points us toward the more sacred season
On a bridge called Gratitude
May we feel it deeply as we travel far.

Love,

*Richard, Linda, Saren (Wellesley College), Shawni, Joshua, Saydi,
Jonah, Talmadge, Noah, Eli, Charity 2*

Time Travel

Time travel,
Sounds fictional . . . yet takes on
Revved-up reality as we watch children grow,
And change, and move on to college.

Life somehow resembles a frantic, high-speed drive
In a crowded car . . .
Yet it's so much fun! Where would you rather be?
On the sidelines? Watching the race?
Sitting safe outside the screen?
Peering in at the dodgem cars colliding and people laughing?

No screen in real life, no boundaries, only endless
Uncertainty,
Which can be translated: "excitement."

In this trackless journey,
One needs a compass rather than a roadmap . . .

Stewardship

Thanks giving for what?
Your new car? Your new job? Your new idea?
Your new talent? Your new cause? Your new baby?
A good list, for all are gifts.
A bad possessive personal pronoun, for none are yours.
Each is a gift of stewardship—
His because all is His,
Entrusted to us to use, to build, to enjoy, to share.

Our favorite holiday this, because thanks giving
Mirrors stewardship!
Thanks is given for the given,
Not for the earned because there is none of that.
Thanks giving implies acknowledging the source and
Gratitude to the Giver.



Why does it matter?

Simply because ownership roots grow branches of pride, envy,
Covetousness,
Competition, manipulation, greed, and stress;
While stewardship roots generate humility, gratitude,
Service, charity, guidance, and peace.

Our most joyful stewardship is you—friends and family.
You are given to us, and we give thanks.
Let us serve you, enjoy you, love you . . .
Even through means as small as this greeting.

*Linda, Richard, Saren (19), Shawni (17), Joshua (15),
Saydria (14), Jonah (12), Talmadge (11), Noah (9), Elijah (6),
Charity (3)*

Indian Summer

Decade changes shake us, awaken us, make us wonder
if we knew how happy we were—
those moments of birth, of beauty, of becoming—
Have we grasped them? Felt their full joy?
And now—are we fully reaching the present now?
We've tried, this round-year
through Kamakura summer and Winnepesaukee fall
to slow time and see now,
to appreciate '90 as we think about '00.

A life has seasons:
blooming vibrant spring,
full-heat summer, slower mellow fall, reflective winter.
What season, these '90s? Where are we?
Fort- something, completed family, some children leaving,
spinning off into their own orbits
(or twirling away like autumn leaves).

Summer seems past, yet we're not ready for fall.

So mentally we manage a fifth season—
Indian Summer,
still warmed by current children, present physical,
the fruit and seeds still ripening on our branch.
But fall forewarns—longer shadows,
sharper contracts of reality, crisper air.

Is it lower light or the best of two seasons combined?
The latter, because

even the more frequent frailties are a benefit.
Impressions of indestructibility give way
to aches and wheezes, surrender to reading glasses,
new consciousness of limitations and fragility.
We find ourselves admiring the smooth resilience
of youth—our children surpass us at what we just taught them.
Yet, we welcome it all, because we begin to see connections between
self-sufficiency and self-awareness.

As one slides, the other thins and we find ourselves
more humble, more grateful, more sensitive,
and more dependent on Him to whom
we give thanks
at this season.

*Love, Richard, Linda, Saren (Wellesley College), Shawni (Boston
University), Josh, Saydi, Jonah, Talmadge, Noah, Eli, Charity*

Indian Summer

Decade changes shake us, awake us, make us wonder
if we knew how happy we were --
the moments of birth, of beauty, of becoming ...
Have we grasped them? Felt their full joy?
And now -- are we fully reaching the present now?
We've tried, this round-year,
through Kamakura summer and Winnepesaukee fall
to slow time and see now,
to appreciate 90 as we think about 00.

A life has seasons:

Out On a Limb

Secure, some seasons—soft and straight and stable—
nearly predictable from ease to ease.

Other times, though, we reach, struggle, climb . . . and go
out on a limb.

Pushed by purpose, coaxed by cause, we respond to restlessness
and depart the deft density and easy applause of the familiar
to teeter on a new life-branch
in higher, thinner air.

Our life's long, warm summer, of babies and bedtime stories,
of writing and touring and speaking, of “motherhood and apple pie”
yields to Indian summer.

Vivid, bright, but more biting, with
rough weather and the fate of fall everywhere near.
Part of our writing shifts with part of our thinking
from inside our home to outside—to schools, communities,
to our State and its future.

One thing to write about it, another to do about it.

We are always thankful for friends and family,
but more so now!

In this arena as surroundings and daily destinations grow less familiar,
the known, sure, stability of your support
steadies us.

And most, we give thanks
to Him who built all branches and lifts all limbs.
Who has given us the stewardship and the circumstance
and who had given us you.

Happy Thanksgiving 1991

EYREALM



Out On A Limb ~ ~ We Give Thanks!



(from left) Charity (5), Saren (21), Tasmadge (12), Saydi (16), Eli (8), Jonah (14), Josh (17), Shatoni (19), Roach (11), Linda, Richard



Eli Eye
age 8



Visiting every town in
Utah in preparation for
gubernatorial race.

Working, Winning, Losing, Sharing

1992

Be “actively engaged” says scripture.

“That which does not kill us makes us stronger,” said someone else.

Be “in the arena” said T. Roosevelt, and never “among those cold and timid souls who never knew either victory or defeat.”

Said Rudyard Kipling, “Meet with triumph and disaster,
And treat those two imposters just the same.”

We knew victory in the Summer Convention and defeat in the Fall Election.
We worked hard . . . with the book, the ideas (now with a life of their own),
the board, the staff, countless citizens . . . the eleven of us Eyres,
in this emotional window of time.

Saren and Shawni back from Wellesley and Israel before Church missions.
Josh awaiting study abroad, the smaller ones giving their summer to the cause.
Imploding, density, intensity, together,
Clustered, compressed, channeled on a confined course . . .

Working, winning, losing, sharing.

Appropriate that this season of thanksgiving follows . . . mellow, vivid, still-warm
Time to reflect, realize, restructure. Time to feel gratitude, deep and still,
For you, dear family and friends, to you for loyalty and support
Well beyond our hopes and dreams.

Like moody weather or sudden storms, adversity and disappointment
Are gratitude-enhancers, deepening the tones and contrasts,
Awakening awareness of beauty, of people,
Of the sweeping current of this one particular time on earth
When we can get to anywhere, and everywhere is still different.
We're better for the attempt, and we love you more.

We tried to change a little part of the world
And ended up changing a little part of ourselves.
Happy Thanksgiving!

Shawni (20, just called to Budapest, Hungary mission—will serve in Romania), Joshua (18, leaving Jan. 12 for Jerusalem), Saydi (17, exploring colleges for next year), Saren (22, just called to Sofia, Bulgaria Mission), Noah (12), Charity (6), Talmadge (13), Eli (9), Linda, Richard, Jonah (15), insert, away when photo was taken)

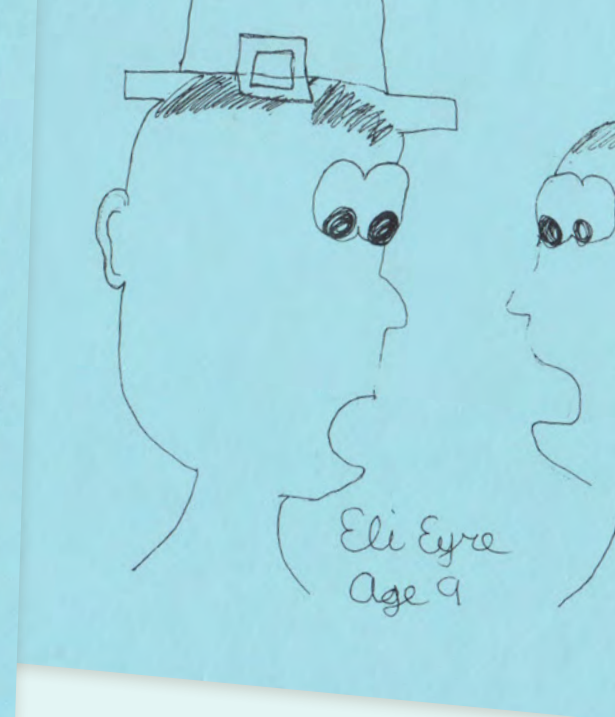
The Campaign.



A New York Times
#1 Bestseller; Back to
Washington and in
Israel.

1993





Blessings

Eastern autumn.

The feel of late fall—mellow, moist, mist-rising mornings,
Wet, leaf-covered paths through high, bright-colored woods,
Swirling yellow leaf showers in the gusts,
Halloween smell, slanting sunshine.

Blessings . . .

This year they have twirled down on us like someone shook the tree.
Books have sold, parents have rallied, causes have grown,
Missionaries have departed (three) and have been powerfully blessed,
Are they part of the blessings or the cause of them?

"Blessings" . . .

The connotation is one of gratitude and gifts,
Not earned or envied, not developed or deserved.
More than foolish—impossible—to take credit
For Gifts too great even to comprehend,
Let alone to survey or summon self-satisfaction.

Blessings . . .

The vast freedom, the boundless opportunity of living now.
The wonder of brothers and sisters who became our children and
Now are becoming our (and each other's) teachers and examples.
An orphanage in the Transylvanian Alps, a #1 national best seller,
A son returning to our old mission in London, and us
Returning for a respite to our first home in Virginia.

Blessings, twirling down like someone shook the tree.
None brighter than you, friends and family. . . .

We give thanks!

*Richard & Linda, McLean; Saren (23), Bulgaria; Shawni (21)
Romania; Josh (19), London; Saydi (18), Wellesley College; Jonah
(16), Talmadge (14), Noah (12), Eli (10), Charity (7).*

The Final Question

Gratitude, Appreciation, Thanksgiving: are these
expressions? emotions? attitudes?
qualities of the spirit?
are they also an art . . . a skill . . .
an awareness / aptitude / ability
that can be discovered, developed?
if an art, then an art worth working on
because these are both the manifestations and the prompters
of real happiness.
blessings are the seeds of our joy.
gratitude is not only the cultivation but the harvest.
writing this card is a chance each year
to practice the art.
then we send it to you—family and friends
other subjects of our thanksgiving:
living now (earth's most commotional, creative, culminating moment).
cause embodied as career (we write and speak on values, balance, families
and in optimistic moments feel society moving that way).
reversing roles with children as they become our teachers
(we sense that they are bigger and better spirits than we)
two missionary daughters (home from eastern europe)
and joined by a third daughter as a troika of college roommates.
a son still serving in England
(and another who faced down death and came out stronger).
twenty-five years of a partnership (that is still getting better).
having finally overcome the political bug that bit us.
even turning fifty (for one who thinks he'll be 100,
the half-way peak is highest—
offering widest panorama, perspective, paradigm).
the final question about thanks-giving
(after we know it and its subjects)
is its recipient (who do we give it to?)
one answer is you.

*Thirtieth book, more
missionaries, three
college-roommate
daughters.*

but the real answer (and our thanksgiving testimony)
is God, our Heavenly Father,
whose hand we acknowledge in all things
and whose blessings we pray upon you.

Eyrealm

1994



"We Give Thanks . . ."

Awakening a Trivialized Word

"Gratitude"

A trivialized word, or at least undervalued.

We say "thanks"—or feel a fleeting wave of appreciation—just a thin skin covering over our take-for-granted mantra mentality.

Instead, gratitude can be a joyful awakening to God's glory, to our own dependent childhood, our ultimate-potential nothingness, a powerful spiritual emotion, thrilling us to our core, tearing our eye, striking deep-space awe and humility so pure it hurts.

Without humility we develop a preposterous paradigm of world-shrinking, self-bloating arrogance or imagined self-sufficiency. Humility has only two approaches: crisis or gratitude.

And scripture calls "more blessed" those who are "humble without being compelled to be humble" (approach two).

Not some luxury then, gratitude,
not some diversion to indulge in occasionally,
not mere etiquette or brief warmth-flashes.
But a way of life, a profound gift/skill
itself worthy of high thanks
involving seeing, feeling, sharing, and abundant love,
yielding humility, perspective, peace, and abundant joy.

We feel it deeply now, this season, for you.

Eyrealm: First row, David (25) and Shawni (23) Pothier, Charity (9), Saren (25), Eli (12), Josh (21), Linda. Back row: Talmadge (16), Saydi (20), Noah (15), Jonah (18), Richard

1995



We Give Thanks

*a powerful spiritual emotion,
thrilling us to our core, tearing our eye,
striking deep-space awe
and humility so pure it hurts.*

*Without humility we develop
of world-shrinking, self-bloating arrogance
or imagined self-sufficiency.
Humility has only two approaches:
crisis or gratitude.*

*And scripture calls "more blessed"
"humble without being compelled to be humble"*

*Not some luxury then, gratitude,
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But a way of life, a profound gift/skill
(itself worthy of high thanks)
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We feel it deeply now, this season, for you.



Fourth and fifth missionaries, and a new trio of books.

Serendipity, Stewardship & Synergicity

At a time when so many seek control,
we give thanks for our lack of it.
For surprise, for the unexpected,
for the adventure of each new remarkably unpredictable day,
for the humility that tells us how little we really control,
for spiritual serendipity . . .
the awareness and the guidance that lets us try
to find something good while seeking something else,
to be a small part of God's plan instead of a large part of our own,
to cross the bridge between our goal and His will.



At a time when so many seek ownership,
we give thanks for our lack of it.
For the sure knowledge that all is God's,
for the awe and the wonder of using all He has entrusted,
for spiritual stewardship . . .
that erases both jealousy and pride
and reminds us of the glorious everythingness of His Fatherhood
and the joyful nothingness and endless potential of our childhood.

At a time when so many seek independence
we give thanks for our lack of it.
For our interconnectedness and mutual dependency,
for you—our family and friends—without which
we would have nothing—and be nothing,
for spiritual synergicity . . .
the magic of a whole greater than the sum of its parts—etched with divine timing,
body and spirit, spouse with spouse, friend to friend, man and God.

*Richard, Linda, Saren at Harvard, Shawni and Dave Pothier in DC, Josh at BYU,
Saydi in Madrid, Jonah in London, Talmadge (17), Noah (16), Eli (13), Charity (10)
at home*

Representing the New Generation

Sure . . .

We could have sent
the usual family picture
Except that Saydi is in Madrid
and Jonah is in London
and besides,
Max is the man to see!
Grandchild number ONE,
pride of five Eyre uncles
and three Eyre aunts,
the perfect combination of Shawni and Dave,
and the start
of a whole new generation of blessings.

We watch the tumultuous transition
from our high perspective
just over the crest of life's midpoint.
The way down (ahead) is not nearly as steep
as the way up (behind).
In fact, it's so gradual we notice no decline at all.
Just easier speed, less resistance.
The clear, joyful awareness of coasting.

Ten times as much in the second half . . .
due to the ease and speed
of the long, smooth incline,
and to accumulated access, assets, abilities,
and to the simple fact
that we can see more from up here.

So we go down gradually . . .
but we extend out dramatically!

What a deal!

What a time!

And grand kids too!

And friends like you!

WE GIVE THANKS!

Love, Eyrealm

*First grandchild, high school
basketball, crammed kids' schedules.*



Be happy to the MAX!

Waning and Waxing

Time flight! Fear of flying or joy in passage?
Both. And, pondering them, a heightened awareness
Of the waxing and waning within our lives.

Waning: Inhabitants of the house

Diapers and dishes, laundry and loose ends
Music lessons and homework sessions
Scouting and shouting
Saturday baths and helping with math.

Waxing: Long-distance calls and long-distance flights

Missions and marriages
Graduations and big occasions
E-mailing and sailing, candle lighting and check writing
College admissions and current-year additions
(a grand daughter, a son-in-law, a TV show, a book).

Along with these mandatory movements of maturity
Come the optional opportunities.

And we opt for:

Less quantity, more quality, less scrambling, more service.

Less hurry and hassle, more humor and harmony.

Less ire, more Eye-er.

Less future focus, more present and past pondering.

Less prose and pace, more poetry and peace.

Less Halloween and more Thanksgiving.

Less getting and more and more and more gratitude
to you and for you—family and friends.

Love, EYREALM

*Speaking engagements and
TV shows, as kids scatter.*



*We Give Thanks
for a Growing Family Tree (see other side)*



Of the waxing and waning within our lives

Waning: Inhabitants of the house
Diapers and dishes, laundry and
Music lessons and homework sessions
Scouting and shouting
Saturday baths and helping with

Waxing: Long-distance calls and long-distance
Missions and marriages
Graduations and big occasions
E-mailing and sailing, candle lighting
College admissions and current-year

1998

Millennium: Better and Better

So fortunate are we
Who divide our lives between two millennia.
We live at the dramatic apex where history meets future.
The best of both,
The exotic diversity of before's undiluted cultures
And the instant access of after's infinite connections.
The only generation that can go in hours by plane
Or seconds by Internet,
To places without McDonalds or white faces
(Mwambalazi, Kenya, and Tuni, Bolivia).

We partake of
All the pleasant possibilities of this last, peaceful pause
Before the culminating crescendo.

Here, now, in that moderated measure,
There is such pleasure.
We live and work in an extended Indian summer,
Wondering under the perfect sky how it can keep getting better
And better.
Nature itself becomes deeper and richer.
Or is it our capacity to enjoy?
Our vertical children become our horizontal friends
And the parents of our spectacular grandchildren.
We are more present in our passions,
More feeling, more moved by art or sport,
Thinking and writing ripples toward greater clarity,
And the Gospel becomes ever warmer, richer, more relevant.

The only appropriate response is Thanksgiving . . .
For when we live,
As well as where, and how, and with whom.
Another Thanksgiving. Last of this Millennium. Better and better.



WE GIVE THANKS

*Two married, two
grandkids, humanitarian
work in Africa and Bolivia.*

1999

*Eyes: Richard, Linda, Eli and Charity (SLC); Saren and
Jared and ? (SF); Dave and Shawni, Max and Elle (VA);
Josh (DC), Saydi (NYC), Jonah (Boston), Talmadge
(Brazil), Noah (Hawaii)*

Then, Now, and Forever

Twenty people and a dog in this photo now,
Twenty people!
Time slips, slides, shifts, and sifts away like sand blowing.
Leaving, as it clears, numbers that increase geometrically.
With generations and geometry working for us, the faces
On each year's card get smaller and more numerous.
We start imagining something akin to nine times nine times nine.
Branches thrust out through the sky
Into eternity. Life after, kingdoms beyond.
In that direction of hope,
Family is the expanding joy of births, marriages, and grandchildren.

But for Thanksgiving perspective, turn your glance away
from the branches and sight down along the trunk.

Break the surface barrier and tunnel the roots—
down through the entire earth and out
Into the other side of eternity, life before, Kingdom past.
In that direction of worth, family is God,
and you were brother or sister,
Waiting with us for a turn in mortality

The dynamic present draws its joy from both directions. . . .
So at Eyrealm we lived this year writing about and balancing our
Past and future paradigms.
Backward and forward eternities—one continuum making us
Eternally grateful for you,
Friends and family,
Then, now, and forever

*Rick and Linda; Saren; Jared and Ashton (San Jose); Shawni, Dave, Max,
and Elle (McLean, VA); Josh (Washington DC); Saydi (Columbia, NYC);
Jonah and Aja (Harvard, Cambridge); Talmadge (SLCC); Noah (Santiago,
Chile); Eli; Charity (East High); and Able (dog house).*

2000

*Three married, three grandkids, further
scattering, seventh missionary.*



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Branches thrust out through the sky
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In that direction of *hope*,
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turn your glance away from the branches and
sight down along the trunk.

Break the surface barrier and
tunnel the roots – down through the entire earth and out
into the other side of eternity, life before, kingdom past.
In that direction of *worth*,
family is God, and you were brother or sister,
waiting with us for a turn in mortality.

The dynamic present draws its joy from both directions. . . .
so at Eyrealm we lived this year writing about and balancing our
past and future paradigms.
Backward and forward eternities – one continuum making us
eternally grateful for you,

Six Graduations

A Harvest!

Six graduations in the spring
(Eli, Tal, Aja, Saydi, Adam, and Courtney)
Three new grandchildren in the summer
(Grace, Isaac, and Aniston).

And so long a history of Thanksgiving Cards. This is number Thirty.
Other years we would pick some random theme of personal interest
For our poem—what an unappreciated luxury that was.
This fall that casual choice was obliterated
By a titanic terrorist tragedy,
Media magnified to gargantuan proportions.
Numbing body, mind and heart—but not soul!
For this is an old story of secret vs. sunlight,
And we trust all to Him.

It serves to remind us of the ongoing fact of our total vulnerability,
Exposing the lying illusions
Of control, independence, and ownership,
And opening us to the beauty and reality of their three counterpoint truths:
The serendipity of our need for God's guidance
 And the pleasure of watching for His will;
The synchronicity of our dependence on Him
 And our interdependence on each other;
And the stewardship of acknowledging our nothingness
 And His everythingness.

2001

"...live in thanksgiving daily..." (alma 34:38)



*Thirtieth card, and a year with six graduations, six grandkids,
and a regular segment on Good Morning America.*

Within these three realities
Is a place of perfect priorities and peace
That engulfs us and reminds us that it is you—
Our friends and family—who matter,
And who always will.

Eyrealm



Miracles and Full Nesters

Another year: An emptier nest and writing about it.

Misnomer though—

Its fuller than ever before, full of memories but also

Full of evolving, expanding family challenges,

Full of drop-by entourages of college sons

and high school daughter,

And often full of four Eyrealm generations

at event-prompted reunions. . . .

Blessings, Births, Baptisms, Ballgames, Birthdays,

Anniversaries, Graduations, Performances, Farewells,

Weddings, Homecomings, Holidays.

The old nest has morphed from practice court to game-day arena,

A venue for big events.

Forget that conjured image of a brittle, stinky empty nest,

Dried up, stark, prickly, and ready to crumble into dust.

The worn old nest buds out again—a perennial!

All the nourishing that happened here germinates and

Breathes life back into the twigs and they begin to flower.

A new flightling takes a living branch and transplants it.

Second generation nests begin to appear afar.

We feel less like a nest shrinking than like a garden growing.

More like a spring than a fall.

The revitalized mother nest goes mobile:

Bear Lake, Jackson, or Kolob.

A moving target for return migrators.

Miracles: Nests that fly, sticks with buds, roots with wings,

Children who teach their parents, and

Places on the earth that become places in the heart.

Our nest runneth over!

Thanks Giving to you and for you friends

and family who furnished

Some of our twigs, now woven forever

Into our hearts.

Eyrealm

2002

*Fourth wedding,
eighth missionary,
fortieth book,
heads spinning.*



Turn the Hearts, Repair the Breach

Two ancient prophets who saw our day and
Offered their three-word solutions:

Malachi saw materialism and the mayhem of misplaced priorities
And warned on the last page of the Old Testament, of a whole world wasted
Unless, within families, we would
“Turn our Hearts.”

Isaiah in his 58th chapter, saw an earth divided, a growing gap
Between rich and poor,
Two sides both suffering,
One from starving scarcity and one from selfish surplus.
He challenged us to
“Repair the Breach.”

Both prophets’ solutions are two-edged swords that swing both ways,
Parents’ hearts turning to children, children’s hearts to parents,
Rich’s resources curing poor as poor’s perspectives cure rich.

Both fixes have a macro and micro:
Heart-turning is a political fix for society and a personal fix for families.
Breach-repair can stop wars in the world and hubris in the home.

Both solutions can turn the two most common objects
of passive Thanks-giving: Family and Posterity
Into the two most powerful subjects of active Thanks-giving:
Nurturing and Charity

*Love, from Saren and Jared +3 in San Jose, Shawni and Dave +4 and Josh
in Phoenix, Saydi and Jeff in Cambridge, Jonah and Aja +2 in Auckland,
NZ, Talmadge in SoCal, Noah in Provo, Eli in Tokyo, Charity in Salt Lake,
Grandma Ruthie in Logan, Eva and Adam +1 in San Diego, Eldar and
Courtney in Provo, Rick and Linda on a plane*

2003



Repairing the Breach

Thanksgiving, Family, and the Second Half

Worlds changing, our little one and God's big one.
Out there: growing gaps, advancing amorality, family fragility.
In here: an empty nest, a closing office, more travel.
This year is the fulcrum and we feel Thanksgiving
For thirty-five years together, the first half behind. . . .
Of rearing, writing, remaining, and in reach.
Thanksgiving for thirty five years to go, the second half ahead. . . .
Of outreach and added access to a world of need.

So . . . it's still about families. . . .

Family1, our own, spread wide and savory, serving.
Family2, the world's, still striving but spread thin and
Sliding on the slippery slopes of a spoiling society.
Family3, His, of which we are all a part, and thus reminded . . .
That loyalty to the commonality of spiritual siblings is both higher and deeper
Than loyalty to the divisions of country or class or culture,
And to spread our grief past 1,000 American soldiers to 100,000 Iraqi civilians,
And to see His temporary Church as scaffolding to build His permanent Family.

It's hopeful and heartening
To bounce around the world, each landing vastly different
In cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, political, and economic trappings,
But similar and synonymous in the feelings, the hopes, and the love
Parents feel for their children.
But it's horrific and heart rending
To see family, the basic block of which society and eternity are built,
Ebbing, eroding, sometimes exploding in the death beam
Focused by the fracturer who knows broken bricks topple the whole building.

How to enlist freedom, fortune, and all of us
From Family1 in the service of Family2 and the cause of Family3?
We start with a mission statement for the second half:
"FORTIFY FAMILY: Celebrate Commitment, Popularize Parenting, Validate Values, Bolster Balance"

EYREALM



*Bali and near full-time
travel, online card,
Family Vision Statement.*

Where does Gratitude lead?

Thanks giving, the art, requires a subject as well as an object.
It must be to someone as well as for something.

An atheist's "to" is limited to circumstance and other people.
Gratitude to God is vastly wider and endlessly deep.

At its bright surface, like sun sparkling on the ocean, it is for
the simple satisfaction of a good day,
the beauty of a sunset,
the relief of a safe trip,
the pleasure in a child's accomplishment.
But beneath, its currents of emotion pull us to tears, to faith, and to genuine joy.
Deep for relationships,
Deeper for opulent options and opportunities,
Deeper still for purpose and mercy,
And finally to depths beyond what we can see for the family enveloping eternity
That divine thanks giving encompasses.

Where does gratitude lead? True gratitude?
To entitlement notions of privilege and pride?
To take-for-granted feelings and expectations of excess?
To sedentary satisfaction?
Or does true thanks giving trigger destiny, duty, and the desire to repay?

If you think "the latter"
Then you will understand, and perhaps join in some fashion,
Our cause to strengthen families,
Which we believe is the one way to save the world.

Love, EYREALM

2005

We Give Thanks...



Two Ways to Live, and Think, and Thank

Living, Type A

Be proactive, be in charge,
Be self confident,
Take control of your life.
Depend on yourself and go get things.
Act, don't react.
Plan your work, then work your plan.
Only you can know what you want,
And only you can decide your life.
Set your goals, make your plans,
and let no one stand in your way.

Cultivate strength and knowledge,
Which separates man and Maker.

View your life as a series of competitions,
And as an ongoing effort to prove yourself,
And rise above your rivals.

Understand that achievements
Are life's measure,
And wrap your identity
in positions and possessions.

Let the "W&P" phrases be your guide:
Work and Plan
Will and Purpose
Winning and Pride
Worry and Pursuit
Wealth and Power

Living, Type B

Be spiritually active,
Seek guidance, be humble,
Turn your life over to God,
And depend on Him.
Strive to understand His plan
And seek His will,
For only He knows what is best
For your eternal Soul.
Be aware of His nudges and impressions,
Notice the needs of those around you,
And don't win at others' loss.

Cultivate awareness and perspective.
(The differences between man and Maker).

View your life as a series of opportunities
to serve, and an adventure in discovering
Who God wants you to be.

Know that relationships are life's measure,
And wrap your identity in your family.

Model your life after W&P words:
Watch and Pray
Wander and Ponder
Wonder and Probe
Worship and Praise
Waken and Perceive
Wait and Procrastinate (selectively)
Width and Perspective
Wisdom and Peace

Love, EYREALM

2006



for family...

Is it a Noun, Verb, or Adjective?

“Thanks-Giving” . . . Is it a Noun? (holiday/season/long weekend)

Or a Verb? (appreciation/acknowledgment/attitude of heart)

Or an Adjective? (describing the kind of persons we long most to be)

Perhaps . . .

The noun is there to prompt us to practice the verb,

So that we might one day wear the well-fitting adjective.

To this end, this year,

As a TG(noun) greeting, we send you

Our A-list workout regimen for TG(verb):

Ask for and develop the

Appreciation for life and the

Awareness of small connections that

Allows us to thank the

Author of every blessing every day.

Add the remarkable

Attitude of Serendipity, Stewardship, and Synergicity* and

Adopt the spiritual perspective of

Awe, thus cultivating our

Ability to receive with grace and to gradually

Acquire the joy-giving, joy-gaining

Art of

Acknowledging His hand in

All things. Then, daily,

Ascribe to Him as you Inscribe your journal.

Sending this TG(adj.) greeting,

To you and for you.



With Love, from the great, full, thanks-giving Eyrealm: Linda and Rickey (SLC), Saren and Jared +5 (SGU), Shawni and Dave +5 (PHX), Josh (PHX), Saydi and Jeff +2 (BOS), Jonah and Aja +3 (SGU), Talmadge (JFK), Noah and Kristi +1 (JFK), Eli (SLC), Charity (BOS until Christmas, then as missionary, LHR)

What it is

The first thing to do when you wake,
The last thing to do before sleep,
The beginning of every prayer,
The end of every blessing,
The magnet of spirit,
The entry to solace,
The portal to peace.

THANKSGIVING

The prerequisite of perspective,
The acquisition of awareness,
The residue of responsibility,
The essence of experience,
The wonder of all our wonderings,
The fondness of friends,
The foundation of family.

THANKSGIVING

The deepest of holidays,
The purest of motives,
The sweetest of desires,
The surest of faiths,
The presence of God,
The core part of love.

Love, EYREALM



Informing on Thanks-Giving

Thanksgiving is about seeing and sharing blessings.
We believe the best blessings are beliefs,
So let us forward a score of our fondest to you in the form of forms,
And in a format that tries, humbly, to raise the common denominator
Enough to perhaps, in the mind at least, re-form reality.

Because sometimes, in the mode of thanks-giving,
We are lifted out of the material world
Toward a higher awareness, a broader perspective,
Wherein. . .

Our form of success is relationships,
Our form of independence is interdependence,
Our form of control is serendipity,
Our form of recreation is re-creation,
Our form of ownership is stewardship,
Our form of leadership is service,
Our form of self-help is personal inspiration and guidance,
Our form of confidence is faith,
Our form of marriage is eternal commitment,
Our form of déjà vu is a pre mortal life,
Our form of freedom is agency and truth,
Our form of children is brothers and sisters,
Our form of God is Father,
Our form of family is an envelope within God's family,
Our form of service and giving is consecration,
Our form of meditation is prayer,
Our form of death is birth,
Our form of ultimate source is living prophets,
Our form of peace is the Holy Spirit,

And finally wherein our form of wealth is friends,
Among which we count you, and wish you, with love,
Happy Thanksgiving, 2009, from the Eyrealm.



Thanks-Giving and Receiving

days shorten, skies darken, snow is in the air,
thoughts turn to gathering and gifting
in today's world, which honors proactive controlling and competing . . .
is there room for receiving?

in a paradigm where a Heavenly Father has all, and wants to give us all,
which is the greater gift, the topmost talent, the supreme skill—
the ability to achieve, accomplish, and acquire?
or the reverence to receive?

does “receive” have to be a re-active, passive word?
or can it be a vibrant verb—
a light-filled challenge—an art and a gift?
can it be the perfect complement to the generosity of God?

a perfectly thrown pass or a perfectly given gift counts nothing
if it is dropped
the receiver completes the quarterback and gets passed to more often
blessings multiply, joy abounds

giving and receiving are not opposites, but two sides
of one spinning, sparkling coin
the receiver gives the appreciation that empowers the giver
the giver receives the gratitude that rewards the receiver

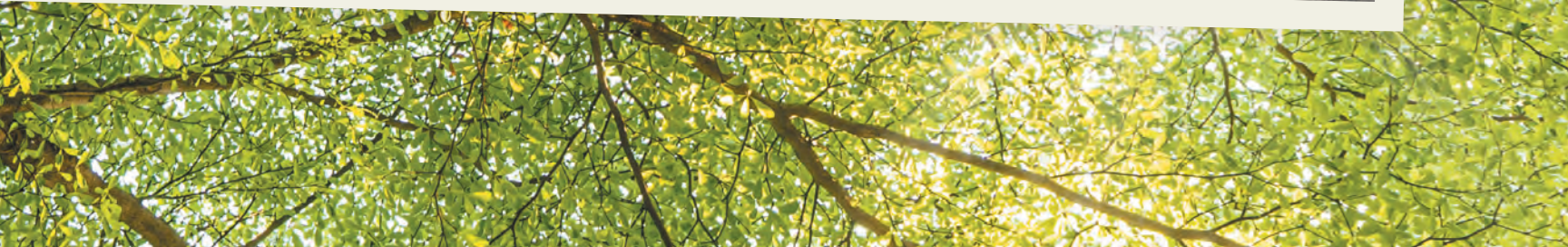
our three, year-ending holidays form an interesting sequence
the dark ghouls of Halloween are transformed
into the light angels of Christmas
by the redeeming recognition of receiving
we call it Thanks-Giving—
the middle, transitional holiday that lifts us from dark to light

From Eyrealm: Saren and Jared +5 in UT, Shawni and Dave + 5 and Josh in PHX, Saydi and Jeff + almost 4 in BOS, Jonah and Aja + almost 4 in SEA, Talmadge and Anita in NYC, Noah and Kristi +3 in the OC, Eli and Julie in DC, Charity in SFO, and us empty nesters in SLC and on airplanes.





2010



The Richness of Autumn

Juxtaposition of cool air in my nostrils and hot sun on the back
Slanting, revealing light, deeper shadows, flaming foliage
Some mornings surprising with snow skiff or frost

Autumn, always the favorite season
And now the season of our lives
Our axis tilts slowly, and stretches our mortal year across nine seasons

A long, growing spring through school and mission and marriage
An early summer of new babies and politics and another mission
A midsummer with full-bloom cacophony of conceived children and books
The lush late summer's missions and marriages and Jerusalem study abroad
Indian summer of central three-campus kingdom and orbiting satellites
And now full autumn, rich and boundless
Then fall, more as a mellow invitation than a lowering threat
Followed by early winter's renewed energy and new snow
And finally the reflective soft silence and reward of deep winter

We love this sixth season because it is now, the last third of the second third
Late enough for perspective but early enough for energy
Bright leaves, some flying in the wind and some still on the tree
We are the eye-ers or seers into the eyes of our nine noble ones
Family members 40 and 41 set to enter this estate as grandchildren 22 and 23
We float on new volumes and audiences to the domains of daughters and sons
Wrapped in each other's oneness, flying far and then homing again and again
To the warmth of three campuses that become physical legacy
Fresh books on entitlement and spiritual solutions
A little early snow from a surgery shoulder and a bungled back previews winter
and enhances returning equine and athletic appreciation

Abundance abounds and giving lags receiving so we get constantly and gratefully more behind
Only our ever-indebted liabilities can balance His ever-given assets
Our thanks-giving forms in the mold of our inability ever to repay

Eyrealm





2011

*Half travel,
half home, 100
countries visited .*



Giving Thanks for Three Places

This Thanksgiving we divide our
Thanks-Giving twice into three parts,
first by place and then by time. . . .

Giving thanks for three places:
The Outer of opportunity and contribution,
The Inner of family and relationships,
The Inner-inner of testimony and peace,
And finding that these three gratuities help
balance priorities and perspectives.

Then, seeking yet another way to feel, giving thanks for three times:
The mellow stewardship of past memories,
The moving serendipity of present moments,
The marvelous synergicity of future milestones,
And discovering that each of these three thanks equates to joy.

Both threes, in place and in time, funnel down to you,
family and friends—
Center of our heart, heart of our thanksgiving.

With love, from Eyrealm
An Eye-er sees, and a realm is a tiny envelope
within His vast one,
Within which we humbly evolve from gratitude to generosity
And pass torches like batons, knowing that it is family
That will lead us back to Him.

THANKS Eyrealm

Starting EyresFreeBooks.com and continuing TheEyres.com.

2012



Takeforgranted vs. Thanksgiving

I glanced at Linda, holding a baby grandchild,
And saw her as an angel of light.
At times, unbidden, other brief glimpses come—
Of earth, of family, of my own body,
Supernal little knowings, suffused with pure perspective,
And generating a flash of unspeakable gratitude and clarity.

These glimpses accuse and convict us of our less-aware usual state, and
Of the universal, tragic, human sin of takeforgranted—
Getting used to glory—to the point where we don't see it anymore,
Don't feel it.
Desensitized to the Divine.

“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil,” said Burke,
“Is for good men to do nothing.”
A corollary:
“All that is necessary for the victory of flat, takeforgranted boredom,
Is for passion and striving and deep-feeling to drag and diminish.”

Excess technology and endless data dumb us down from art and excellence;
Routine and plenty rob us of mind-stretching challenge;
Concrete and convenience pave over rugged, real nature.

Can we keep all of the new and the now,
But learn to juxtaposition it with what it threatens to replace?

Gratitude, the Joy Catalyst,
Is constantly challenged by takeforgranted,
Which shoves down and submerges awareness and appreciation
Holding them under where they can't breathe, beneath the dull weight
Of ease and entitlement.

At Thanksgiving, can we swim back up into consciously thankful joy?



*All adult Eyrealm members at
Grandma Ruthie's funeral.*



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

*Rick and Linda, Saren and Jared +5 in Utah,
Shawni and Dave +5 and Josh in Arizona,
Saydi and Jeff +4 in Boston, Jonah and Aja
+5 in Hawaii, Tal and Anita +1 and Eli and
Julie +1 in NYC, Noah and Kristi +5 in SoCal,
Charity in Palo Alto, and all of us deep within
our gratitude for you!*




Sometimes holiday greeting cards from parents,
And the family letters that accompany them,
Are all about their children's accomplishments.
And why not!?
They are fruits in a way, fruits of a nurtured tree.

None of us are perfect, and none have perfect kids,
But Thanksgiving and Christmas are times to emphasize the positive,
So here we are, indulging, bragging about some of the
Contributions our grown children are currently
Making to un-grown children, and to formative families
(Grabbing our family-focused baton, improving on it, and making it their own).

SAREN, co-founder of Powerofmoms.com,
benefiting hundreds of thousands of deliberate moms throughout the world
SHAWNI, author of an extraordinary mommy blog, 71toes.blogspot.com,
and named National Young Mother of the year by the American Mothers Org.
JOSH, wildly popular third grade teacher influencing hundreds of children
And creating balance and values-centered curriculums
SAYDI, creative professional family photographer
and volunteer one-on-one social worker
JONAH, entrepreneur and creative thinker,
inspiring others to a more economic and natural lifestyle,
TALMADGE, Instituting Imagine Learning, an online English language program
In NYC and getting a Master's degree from UPenn,
NOAH, a manager for Imagine Learning in California,
working on his MBA at USC
ELI, Tal's enthusiastic partner working with Imagine Learning
in the poorest parts of NYC
CHARITY, a terrific charter middle school blended learning specialist and teacher
and an astonishing party planner
And More important: The contributions they are all making in Church,
And with their partnerships and children within their own families

Brag, brag, brag, but it's actually another form of Thanks-Giving!
And it feels good, so do it!
Love, from the Eyrealm



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THE EYRES'
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