

To Milton Martin, a Friend.

**On a Warm Summer Day**

Sorting darks from whites,  
Jane added brighteners,  
Making sure the load was full,  
Drying on GENTLE on a hot summer day,  
As I, holding back the tears, lay dying.

Waiting in line at vacuum pumps,  
Michael used a dollar-off coupon,  
Watched attendants wipe the tires.  
Planning to leave a large tip—  
As I, with no use for money, lay dying.

Susan chose fresh orange juice,  
Passed up frozen entrees,  
Took a cake mix on impulse,  
Prayed the checkout lines were short,  
As I, with taste buds gone, lay dying.

Shining faces pledged allegiance  
To the flag of the United States of America  
And to the Republic for which it stands,  
One nation, under God—  
As I, with pain well masked, lay dying.

Robert made the great room greater,  
Designed grand entryways,  
Enlarged pantries for more storage,  
While I lamented the pain I brought my family,  
As I lay dying.

My life is slowly slipping away  
Like sand through a child's fingers.  
I console my heart with memories,  
Humming, "Jesus doeth all things well,"  
As I lie weeping, dying.

In a war no one has ever won,  
My only armor, a patchwork quilt,  
My will concedes the battle.  
Still my heart says yes to hope and life—  
As I lie dying on a warm summer day.