

## 72<sup>nd</sup> Birthday June 30, 2003

As I approach my 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday, I celebrate the fact that I eluded death from cardiac arrest by having an aortic valve transplant. Now I am in a “to the death” struggle with SuperJane (of the Powers that be!) who urges me daily to *do something*. “*Write! Take piano lessons! Visit the sick! Pray! Clean every closet! Wash every floor and window! Plant a garden! Mow the lawn! Travel the world! Swim in the Caribbean or in Lake Titicaca! Send letters and gifts to the grandchildren! Do something!*”

“Naw,” I respond. “Hush up, chile! At seventy-two my challenge is to enjoy this life I’ve been given as gift. To offer gentle, easy acts of self-love that are appropriate at this time:

- ☞ read with abandon
- ☞ watch old movies ( I love Hepburn and Tracy )
- ☞ write something daily – a paragraph
- ☞ play music daily: my music!
- ☞ Spend time with friends – chatting
- ☞ Keep my home as lovely as it is and enjoy it as it is
- ☞ Sleep in the afternoon
- ☞ Swim in the pool and soak in the hot tub
- ☞ Listen to the operas of my choice: Puccini, Verdi, Donizetti
- ☞ Walk with Dandy as far as I can
- ☞ Kayak on the lake when I am up to it

I am not slowing down, I am revving up to my new appropriate pace. I am accepting and celebrating each day with gratitude for the gift that it is. *It is o.k. to sleep late in the morning!*

God lives and works in the universe and calls me by name. In the next ten years I will produce good works, born of this joy and of my response to the age-appropriate challenge to live in ease, gentleness, curiosity, health, enchantment.

I appreciate SuperJane’s concern for my productivity. I know if I do not put her to rest at this time, if I do not “win” this struggle, all the pain and anguish of getting a new heart valve could be in vain. It wasn’t. SuperJane is old enough now to know her place is not in the driver’s seat of my life.