



The History and Background of the Poems and the Ingram Family

This set of poems were written by Johnny Ingram, Jefferson, Texas. He and Edith relocated to Jefferson from Odessa and for the past 45 years have called this east Texas town their adopted home. They were married for 65 years. Edith passed away on January 18, 2024. Her death was the direct result of **“dementia”**.

When Edith & Johnny moved to Jefferson from Odessa, Texas in 1980. They operated a small engineering & surveying business. After retirement, they established **“The Museum of Measurement and Time”**. The museum was Edith's passion and she lived that dream from its opening in 2010; until she began her struggle with dementia in late 2015.

During her time of illness, Johnny was able to keep Edith at home and provided her care, until her death. After Edith's death; these poems were selected as a **“Tribute to Edith”**. This collection of Johnny's work has been given to friends and visitors to the museum since early February 2024.

Johnny also used this time to discuss the problem of dementia with museum visitors and has found this disease to be wide spread. The number of persons who have dealt with this illness is increasing and no known cure has been found. As a tribute to Edith, Johnny intends to continue this process.

As a matter of detail, some of these poems were drafted prior to Edith's illness, a few were written while she was stricken with this terrible disease and a couple after her death.

The author hopes that these writings provide enjoyment to our readers and gain the support and respect to the memory of my lifetime love, **Edith Buzbee Ingram**. We also trust their words translate to a guide of how to love life, be happy and honor your mate.

I will forever remember Edith's smile and her pleasant disposition. These traits remain as her legacy; **I will always miss her!**

LIFE

There are at least five balls in the juggle of life.
Work, Family, Health, Friends and Integrity.

Juggling these balls and they do not bounce;
whatever the cost, is worth every ounce.

WORK can be boring, or it can be great;
whatever you make of it, determines how it will rate.

FAMILY, be they near or far;
make life worth living, that's what they're for.

HEALTH is necessary, don't cast it too lightly;
take good care of it and the future shines brightly.

FRIENDS are made without any real thought;
the best last forever, even with the baggage we brought.

INTEGRITY, now that's a goal to teach;
everyone starts even, success is measured by how far you reach.

So, what is this all about?
Why cite these words, do they have any clout?

The lesson of the five balls and life may seem like a huge temple;
when addressed individually, they really are simple.

Juggle the balls of life careful and share them with pride.
You are never alone; someone is forever by your side.

Conduct your life, like you're under a scope;
then the balance of life, will hold great hope.

Johnny Ingram May 2009

The idea for these words is from the book "Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas" by James Paterson; page 20-21. One today is worth two tomorrows, pg. 168

LOVE

LOVE is an art form, between two human beings.

Sort of a bond, meant to show feelings.
The act, if done right; most likely will last.
But it can depend, on things from the past.

When you've not been loved, it's harder to show.

Your feelings for others, have no place to go.

LOVE needs help, to keep its success.
It can be diminished, with anything less.

The task is hard, full effort it takes.

If you give any less, resentment it makes.

The moral of **LOVE**, I thank you'll agree.
Is really much more, than just you and me.

LOVE can go around; now don't you see.

It can grow and spread, like the roots of a tree.

Show unto others, as the good book said.

Give it a chance, then it will spread.

LOVE to each other, is great on its own.

But share it with others, see how its grown?

If we do our small part, I think you will see.

A world much more happy, full of singing and glee.

Johnny Ingram 2004

Ode to my Edith

SHOULD I forget each passing day,
to let you know, in some small way:

MY LOVE for you is very real,
this is a fact, I cannot conceal:

GROW as we will, on through the years,
as we're together, we have no fears:

FAINT though our hopes may be,
our children will grow, just wait and see:

REMINDE us each day, we must be strong,
to meet life's challenge, as it comes along:

ME and you-our family; will always be,
always together, like the roots of a tree:

DEAR you are the one, who is so strong,
you are the one, who can do no wrong:

I need your help, in every way,
and trust you more, each passing day:

LOVE is the word, that makes us strong,
it grows and grows, as the year is long:

YOU are the one, my perfect match,
I am so lucky, to make your catch:

MORE than you know, I'm yours alone,
more and more, as years pass on:

EACH minute, I think, how great it is,
to be with you, for all these years:

PASSING our lives, through our friends and family,
has been a **JOY**, for you and me:

YEAR end has come and another one gone,
and we find ourselves, not at all alone.

Johnny Ingram 1997

EDITH

Once there was a little girl and **EDITH** is her name;
her smiling face and friendly grace, like sunshine in the rain.

Those she meets and when she greets are pleased by her calm smile;
yes, **EDI** is her nickname, relax and stay awhile.

Her children, husband and all the pets, are equal and the same;
she shares her all with each of us, **MOTHER** is her name.

I live with her and know her well, that's how she plays the game;
she loves us each and all the same, **HONEY** is her name.

Nights will come and days go by, one thing remains the same;
steady she is and quietly she hears, **FRIEND** is her name.

Though she is somewhat older now, these traits still remain;
her family blessed and friends impressed, **EDITH** is her name.

Johnny Ingram, July 2001

This poem was one of the first poems drafted by Johnny (her husband). and was not widely shared, until after her death. These words are as true today as they ever were!

I always stated “**if she has any faults, I gave them to her**”

I LOVE AND MISS YOU, HONEY!

Johnny Ingram, January 2024

EDITH'S DEMENTIA

Part of this rhyme was initially written as “The Alzheimer's Poem” by an author unknown to me. I took the liberty of using the subject and part of the words to create a tribute to my wife. Edith who has been dealing with dementia since 2016.

These words are written in the first person, from what could be her point of view. This story tries to describe the road she has traveled. The only reality, we truly understand, is we must be gentle in our relationship and understanding during the care of those affected with this terrible disease.

This is about a disease, uncommon to my clan;
an illness that destroys, the mind of man.

Its symptoms are vague and really strange;
the changes are many and how they range.

With me, it started in late 2016;
I had small problems, that went unseen.

Things that only a husband might see;
mannerisms I have, that make me – me.

Then the problems became, even more clear;
obvious to others, not just my dear.

Like placing shoes, on the wrong feet;
or wearing clothes, in a manner not neat.

Then the doctor ask me to remember;
three words, that I promptly forgot.

From this point on, my thoughts are clear;
friends and Family, from my past were near.

This period in the past, was so much fun;
and I wanted to share it, with everyone.

Then people started, to confuse me;
They tried to redirect, what I could see.

I was amazed, with their loss of the past!
I was so happy, I just wanted it to last.

Then I became obsessed, with going home;
moving without direction, I started to roam!

when you locked me in, all I wanted was out!
I don't understand, what's the fuss about?

The result became a "Battle of Wills";
you treated it as though, it was a game of skills.

If I'm really sick, how long will it last?
I'm just a victim, not the one to ask!

I'm in a stage, my thoughts are only sounds;
although I am mute, my hearing abounds.

I still can hear and also see;
but dressing and feedings, are done for me;

I'm happy, tho I can't tell you how much;
I appreciate you, your attention and such.

My final wish, is for you to know;
where ever I am, **I LOVE YOU SO!**

The road has been long and the surface rough;
and now it's changing again, **enough is enough!**

Johnny Ingram May -July, 2023

**TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND;
HERE'S SOME GUIDANCE AND A PLAN.**

**DO NOT ASK ME TO REMEMBER.
JUST KNOW, I LOVE YOU DEAR!**

Don't try to make me understand.
Kiss my cheek, hold my hand.
Just repeat the things I like to hear.
Let me rest and know you're near.

I feel lost and sick with fear.
I'm confused, beyond concept dear.
I feel lonely, I'm glad you're here.
More than ever, I need you near.

Don't lose your patience or ask me why?
Do not scold me, curse or cry.
I can't explain the way I react.
I just can't remember how to act!

Though, I act like you're not here.
Remember that I need you dear.
The best of me, is now gone.
But please don't leave me, all alone.

**JUST STAND BESIDE ME DEAR!
LOVE ME, TILL MY LIFE IS DONE.**

Original words; Alzheimer's Poem, author unknown
modifications by Johnny Ingram July 2023

CAREGIVERS FOR DEMENTIA and ALHEIMER'S

Much has been written, about this illness of the brain.
The words herein address, another side of the game.
For each person afflicted with this illness, has a counterpart.
And this person must display, a special kind of heart.

Dementia removes memory, from its stored place;
and this condition results, in a sort of race.
In this sprint, between the body and the mind;
the mind always wins, our role is to be kind.

Soon after the beginning, a **CAREGIVER** is there.
The role of this person, is to provide care.
However, there's much more to this accepted role;
and we offer a tribute to those, who've accomplished this goal.

As the mind leads the way, following a strange route;
the body is on a death march, that's what this is about.
CAREGIVERS who assist a patient, with this difficult ride;
can accept **solace**, in the comfort you provide.

A reminder to those, who provide care for this devastating event;
CAREGIVERS need only go, where they are sent.
As a comforting companion, keep this thought in sight;
ALWAYS agree with the patient, tell them "**That's right**".

While these are only words to describe, a role that others fill;
our real concern is for the patient, to whom this is **“REAL”** !!

Johnny Ingram April 2024 revised Jan 2025

DRIVING TRIPS AND MY TRAVEL INTO NEVER NEVER LAND

These thoughts are written to preserve the events which ultimately would lead into a period of health concerns for Edith Buzbee Ingram. Johnny had noted small problems with Edith's memory while she was driving on vacation.

It was October 2015, She was having some trouble with traffic as we were traveling through Tyler, Texas. Johnny had to drive the remaining distance to Jefferson. This event must have been the start of her decline.

Later that year, in December, she started acting strange and Johnny could tell she needed immediate treatment. He went to the office of a local medical service. This office refused treatment being as she was not a patient,

He then drove to Marshall and attempted to get her to her regular doctor. This office could not work her into their schedule until that afternoon.

Almost in a panic by then, Johnny took her to the Emergency Room of the Marshall Hospital. The early diagnosis was pneumonia; after she was stable, it was probable that Edith was going to be placed in a room overnight. Johnny went home to get a change of clothes so he could stay the night.

Upon his return she had been moved from the Emergency Room; but they were unable to locate where she was taken. After a period of search, she was found to be in ICU. She had been diagnosed with not only pneumonia but a blood disorder, thus the ICU .

Later explanation was given that both conditions required the same treatment and together they needed to be handled with ICU treatment.

The next 16 days were spent in ICU; it is during this period that Edith started the decline which led to her being diagnosed with dementia. Johnny was with her 24 hours each day and it was during this time that Edith experienced an unusual circumstance.

After a couple of days Edith began to recover from the Blood Disorder. It was at this time that Edith started to see things that were not real! She would ask me "who is that person at the window?" Of course, there was not a window in her room so the question became "what's happening?"

Medical staff and a doctor explained what was going on. "Elderly persons who have been removed from familiar surroundings sometimes have hallucinations and see things that are imagined and not real. They call this circumstance "**Sundowners**".

Edith continued this situation for several days and it was not considered a major problem. She was released from the hospital right out of ICU which was unusual? It was not a long time until we had a follow-up visit with her regular physician, I mentioned not only the "**sundowners**" situation but other concerns I had noticed.

The doctor gave her a memory test which required her to recall 3 words provided at the beginning of the visit which she was to repeat at the end. Edith could not recall any of the words.

Before our next visit, three months later, Edith told me prior to entering the doctor's office" if she wants me to repeat those three words, I still do not remember them! "With that statement, I was less concerned about her memory.

Conditions continued to occur that did concern me; so, the doctor ordered a brain scan, which we took to a neurologist. He looked at the scan and ordered a few more tests over the next 2-3 months. After about six months of treatment, he reported "her memory problems are normal aging". My immediate response was 'her memory loss is unlike my memory loss'. We continued visits to this doctor for a couple of months and stopped going! Dementias still has not been confirmed!

During this period Edith's problems continued. Her problems were small things that persons who were not around her all the time would not notice. As time passed, that situation worsened.

Edith began to make mistakes that others could see. She placed her shoes on the wrong foot and turned shirts inside-out and placed them on backwards. Her memory was starting to deteriorate more rapidly. She started to talk continually about persons who were long deceased as if they were fresh in her memory. For a better understanding of this period, I refer you to the daily diary I have maintained since the beginning.

Now I am going to try to write some rhyme to describe this period. These words and thoughts are in the first person and represent what may have been Edith's thoughts during this period.

MY JOURNEY INTO NEVER NEVER LAND

My journey started with a kind of glee;
my travels include "**Honey**", that's my husband and me.

Male egos want to be in charge;
So, **Honey** directed our travel, when we were at large.
Oh! we planned together, these trips from home;
But our travels really, were more of a roam.

I'll digress for a moment, let me catch my breath.
and review the events, before I start this trip.
My honey's stroke made me the designated driver;
this was 2005, we were going to Macinack Island.

Not good with directions, I ask "how do we go"?
His reply, "drive east, turn left, when we arrive, you'll know."
I made the turns, just like I was sent.
Remarkably, we made it home, so on other trips we went!

We followed Lewis & Clark along the route of their expedition;
that's the way, we covered the northwest rendition.
Other trips we made, if as we were sent;
many sights and sounds, everywhere we went.

The last trip in this tale, concerns a route I did take;
and for a purpose, I did not make.
I didn't go in a car and didn't leave home;
one day my mind just wandered and started to roam.

That day, I woke up, to a new face;
and I seemed to be, in a strange place.
I wondered who is this person and where am I?
Strange things are happening and I wondered why?

I know who I am and from where I came;
someone is trying, to play a game.
Who are these people, standing over me?
They are strangers, not a friend do I see.

At first, I was unconcerned and may have used;
this period of thought, to stay, kind of amused,
Because the memories were so real;
and they expanded with a sort of zeal.

They replaced what was happening today;
and they were so clear, what can I say?
I get hugs and kisses; from people I don't know.
I just tolerate it, as they come and go.

My memory floats, always in a stir;
when thoughts do occur, they're only a blur.
So now I can hear and also see;
but dressing and feedings, are done for me;

What does the future hold for me?
I've heard them say "Let's just wait and see."
I'm not one to be pushy, but I want to know;
how much farther, do I have to go?

How long will it continue, this condition I'm in?
I'll just accept it and proceed, with a grin.
This period is only temporary, I hope.
at least it will stop at the end of my rope.

When my time is near and it's close to the end;
have no worries, don't be sad my friend.
I'm in no pain, don't have a regret;
I lived by the rule - what you sow, you also get.

I don't look forward, to this coming event;
But; one must follow the path on which they are sent,

So, hold back your tears and weep not for me;
I'll be in a place of no regrets, you see.

Free of this ball & chain that's attached to me;
to a life, full of fun, laughter and glee!

So, as I end, I'd like you to know;
There is one person, "**I love him so**";
my one & only, he's my soul mate you know!

A final thought, I'd like to convey;
It concerns my travels and I'd like to say.
I have enjoyed, all the places, to which I was sent;
But; I could have done without this last trip, on which I went!

Johnny Ingram July-August 2023

This poem was written a couple of weeks after **Edith, my wife** died from dementia. It reflects my thoughts at that time. It does not address her time with dementia nor my point-of-view as a caregiver. **Only my Love for her!**

DEATH BY DEMENTIA

During the first month, of the ninth year;
I felt, somehow, the end was near.
Perhaps the moon moved, or showed a new side;
and the weather, had formed, a sheet of ice outside.

Whatever the reason, I sensed, the end was near;
And I didn't want to share, this thought, with my dear.
We stayed trapped, while, she was asleep;
This provided, a time, for me to weep.

I love her so, and didn't want, her to know;
Even with her sickness, I wasn't ready, for her to go!
I had this feeling, wanting, to keep things the same;
While sharing memories, with her by name.

After three days alone, I knew, it was time to let go;
this decision, was difficult, **I love her so.**
As I watched, her taken, under someone elsie's care;
I would find somehow, a way, so I would be there.

I'll not repeat details, of me being there;
Suffice it to say, this part, was hard to bear.
We shared this time together and said our goodbye;
All the time me, asking **GOD, "must you take her now and why"?**

Now that it's over and I've started to heal;
I've forgiven **GOD** and accepted his will.
He has a reason, for me to stay;
So, I'll stay loose and let him have his way!

But nothing can replace the pleasure we've had;
And losing her, is ever so sad!
I'll just count my blessings and remember the blur;
I am so lucky to have spent, my life with her.

This is my wife's favorite word.
She lived by the basis of this thought,
I submit these words as a token of my **"LOVE"** for her.

JOY

There is a word, only three letters long;
when used for its meaning, is like a song.
But, with letters expanded, each with a new name;
it takes on a new life and it's not the same.

"JOY" is the word, of which I speak;
In this form, it is a feeling we seek.

Expressed in another form, will help guide life;
And, when used together, it will reduce strife.

The first letter **"J"**, is expanded to spell **"JESUS"**;
The second letter **"O"**, now stands for **"OTHERS"**;
And the last letter **"Y"**, is now **"YOURSELF"**.

Applied independently, they only provide a guide;
What merit they have, only you will decide.

Keep **"JESUS"** and his teachings, close by your side.
Place **"OTHERS"** second, only you can decide.
Keep **"YOURSELF"** third, as you abide.

If you choose this order, as you pass through life;
You'll avoid conflicts, as you address strife.

Place **"JESUS"** 1st, **"OTHERS"** 2nd and **"YOURSELF"** last;
then **"FORGIVENESS"**, you won't have to ask.

Johnny Ingram, December 2023

These comments are an after-thought to my writing the rhyme "**JOY**". The information conveyed here-in was given to me soon after my marriage to Edith Buzbee Ingram, June 6, 1958. Our union lasted 65 years, 7 months and 12 days when she finally surrendered life to the disease of Dementia.

When a young girl, Edith's, Mother "Florence Buzbee" repeated the following story to her as a guidance for life.

"The word "**JOY**" is a special word. It carries guidance to conducting your life. "**J**" stands for **JESUS**, "**O**" stands for **OTHERS** and "**Y**" stands for **YOURSELF**. Place **JESUS** first, **OTHR**S second and **YOURSELF** last and you will never go wrong."

Edith carried this guidance with her throughout her life. In-fact I heard her repeat this story of **JOY** to several ministers and religious persons who said "they were going to use that lesson as a sermon."

Edith used these words to quitely and without using extreme directness, guide her life. I suggest that during her lifetime, I offen stated "**if she has any faults, I gave them to her**".

Our life together is full of pleasant memories. I am so blessed to have spent my life with her. May she rest in peace!

EDITH, NOW THAT YOU ARE GONE

Edith, I struggle - with you now gone;
In this world, you left - I'm all alone.

Edith, others tell me, you will survive;
But, it was so different – with you by my side.

Edith, my days are empty - they have no zeal;
Night still follows day, but – its length is unreal

Edith, now that you are gone - I've much less to do;
And it's not the same, as when - I was with you.

Edith, times were exciting – when you were around;
Not so now, there's a heavy silence - in the sound.

Edith, I apologize for any spoken words - that were sharp to you;
For that, there is no excuse – that's a thoughtless thing to do.

Edith, while on "bended knee" - let me confess;
I ask forgiveness, for any time - I caused you unrest.

Edith, I realize I'm tardy to mention - these faults to you;
But, as I confess - that's the best I can do.

Edith, in your fight with dementia - I admired you so;
As I shared in your care, I experienced something - I want you to know.

Edith, "**I FELL IN LOVE AGAIN**" - and not only to make it rhyme;
This experience, was different - from the other time.

Edith, I'm so lucky to have found you - as my mate;
"I LOVE YOU SO", as a wife – there is no scale to rate!

Johnny Ingram, July 2024