

Milton Forrest

1914 -1991

Grandpa Milt's Art and Poetry

Milton Forrest 1914-1991

This book is dedicated to the artistic and athletic granddaughters of Grandpa Milt: Nicole, Tamiko, Miya, Ginny, Jamie, and Caity.

Milt Forrest had many ups and downs in life. He entered Stanford a diving star and married your beautiful Grandma Fran. He had three precious children, but tragically lost his oldest Carol in a house fire. Throughout his adult life your grandpa struggled with mental illness, and yet despite his difficulties, he maintained his optimism, idealism, and humor.

I hope that these pages will illustrate that you have your Grandpa Milt to thank, at least

in part, for your love of the arts, athletics, and nature. I know that he would be so very proud of the young women you have become.

Much Love,

Dad / Uncle Dave
August 2008



Milton Friedman was born in 1914 and raised in San Francisco.

Shown left, Grandpa Milt's father, Henry Friedman, and his mother, Helen Eisner.



Your grandfather was born Milton Friedman, Forrest would come later. He was born in 1914 and raised in San Francisco by his parents Henry and Helen Friedman. He was the only boy among his three sisters: Beatrice, Margaret, and Virginia.

His father Henry Friedman was one of eight children born to an Eastern European Jewish immigrant, Marx Friedman, who arrived in San Francisco in 1877. His grandmother's maiden name was Shlomsky, originating from the word peace (shalom) in Hebrew.

Grandpa Milt's mother was Helen Eisner. Growing up we knew her as "Nanny Helen." Her trademark was beautiful strawberry blonde hair, not unlike Jamie Lynn's.

Milton was raised on hiking, horseback riding, swimming,

and lots of fresh air. He was a very athletic boy, and by middle school he excelled in springboard diving. His talent caught the eye of members of the exclusive San Francisco Olympic Club. They awarded him a free lifetime membership, as they did other exceptional local athletes.

Early in the 1930's Milton entered Stanford University, majoring in business. At the university he became the top diver. He was invited to Arizona, with other top collegiate athletes, to try out for the 1936 Olympic team. He declined to compete at the Trials in Arizona. As he explained it, he was tired of diving by his senior year of college. In his 60's, we returned to the Olympic Club and met people who still remembered your Grandpa's exceptional diving and handball skills.

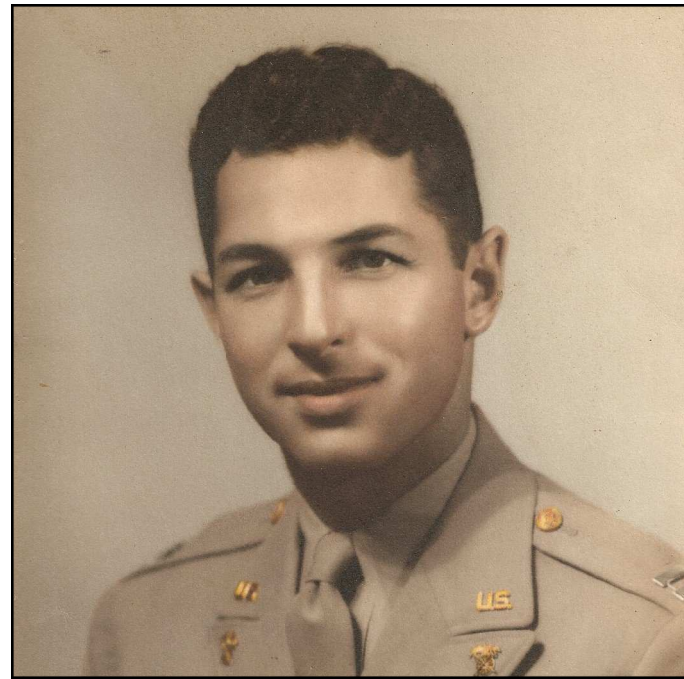




The Friedman Family horseback riding in La Jolla, California. From left to right, father Henry, Milton, three sisters, Virginia, Margaret, Beatrice and mother Helen.



After earning a college degree, Milton joined the Army-Air Force. He entered the service in the Quartermaster Corps in 1939. During WW II he was stationed on a small South Pacific island called Guadalane. As a Captain, he oversaw food and supplies heading for US troops fighting in the Pacific Theater.



His job was important to the supply lines supporting the war effort, but it was not dangerous. During the war he also took rest and recreation in Hawaii. The beautiful blue water of the South Pacific appeared in many of his paintings, including the one on the following page he titled "The Outrigger."



From Friedman to Forrest

We were told growing up that Friedman was not our family's original Eastern European name. Our ancestors were Jews living in Poland and Russia, immigrating in the 1870's. As the story went, when Henry's father, Marx, arrived in America he decided to choose a name that was easier to pronounce. This was not uncommon for immigrants. A Friedman Cracker Company billboard caught his eye, and when he learned that Friedman meant "free man" in German, he chose this as his new name.

When your Grandpa Milt returned from WW II, he decided to change his name from Friedman to Forrest. He said he did this because he didn't want

to be associated with his father's well known furniture business. The young Milton reasoned that he would start his business career in San Francisco independent of his father's reputation, rising or falling on his own laurels.

Your Grandpa Milt said he chose Forrest because of the connotation of the trees, although he spelled it with the double R. In addition, he always insisted that he did not change his name to downplay his Jewish roots, as some did after the Holocaust. Whatever the real reason, Friedman became Forrest. Milton, and perhaps his grandfather Marx, changed the family surname.

The Face of God

The face of God
Is everywhere I look
In every Tree --
Every Flower --
Every Sky --
No matter what Color.

The face of God appears
Everywhere
In look of Love
In Touch of Hands
In Kindness -- Peace --
Serenity.
In every Church
In every Creed
In every Land.

The Face of God

Simply put --

Is -- LOVE

The true Joy of Life

Our real Reason for Being.
How and Why we Create

Why the Birds Sing
And Poets Write
and Artists Paint.

Down thru the Centuries
T'is Love --
The FACE of GOD.

October 19, 1979
Rohnert Park



After the war your grandfather met your grandmother, then named Frances Julia Newman. She was ten years younger than Milton, and he waited to propose to Frances on her 21st birthday. Once married they settled in Sausalito and then moved to Mill Valley.



During the 1950's Carol was born, two years later David, and finally Lisa. Your Grandma Fran was a housewife, and Grandpa Milt commuted to the city to work in insurance. Tragedy struck when the Mill Valley house burned down, killing the oldest Carol.



Woodblock Print 11/58
San Francisco from Marin

Without Love

Without Love
You are a Wanderer
You may Travel
the whole world over
Searching restlessly
for Yourself
And for Happiness

But without Love
There are No Songs to sing
No Birds to listen to
No perfumed Fragrances
of Flowers -- to Inhale

Your Fireplace is Useless
It gives no warmth
(Nor does your Bed)
No Heat-- No Comfort
Your Kitchen is an Empty place
Without Love to Share it.

Who are you then --
Rich or Poor?
Old or Young?
Male or Female?

Who are You -- Really --

Then --
Without Love?

Run, poor little Soul
Buy and Sell --
Travel -- Purchase.
Adorn Thyself
With the trappings of
Richest Gold.
Search for Fame --
Careers -- Publicity
Toil as you will --
Pile Gold on gold --
Like Ancient Pharaohs --
Build the Highest Pyramid --

It is all Useless --
A waste of Time
You are Nobody
Without Love.

September 24, 1982
Rohnert Park



Without love
 You are a Wanderer -
 You may Travel
 The whole world over
 Searching restlessly
 For yourself
 And for Happiness -

But - without love
 There are No Songs to sing
 No Birds to listen to
 No perfumed Fragrances
 of Flowers - To Inhale.

Your Fireplace is Useless
 It gives No warmth
 (Nor does your Bed)
 No Heat - No Comfort
 Your Kitchen is an Empty place
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 Careers - Publish
 Toil as you will -
 Pile Gold on Gold -
 Like Ancient Pharaohs -
 Build the Highest Pyramid

It is all Useless -
 A waste of TIME
 You are Nobody
 Without love .

Grandpa Milt's poems often started on napkins and scraps of paper, and were later recopied into a black composition book.

Sausalito Memories

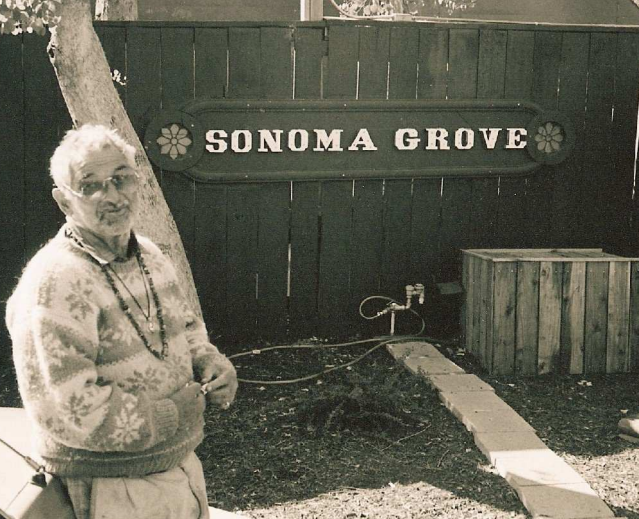
In 1960 Milt Forrest divorced, moving to Sausalito. During the early 60's I would visit my dad, your Grandpa Milt, in his Sausalito apartment overlooking the San Francisco Bay. On weekend visits, we watched Saturday morning cartoons, while dining on Swedish pancakes. Dad and I spent our mornings playing at a nearby park, picnicking on a can of tuna and loaf of fresh French bread from the local market. In the afternoons, we would watch the fishermen bring in their catch. I would chase tiny crabs in the rocks below the pier, a perfect challenge for a ten-year-old boy.

Your grandfather captured the scene of the sailboats, bay and pier from his apartment window in a 1984 painting of the Sausalito shown on the following page. To my knowledge, the nude reclining on the dock never existed, more likely your Grandpa Milt's wishful thinking.



Forrest

1984



Later in life your Grandpa Milt relocated to the Cotati and Rohnert Park area of southern Sonoma. He lived for many years at the Sonoma Grove Trailer Park, very near the Sonoma State Campus.

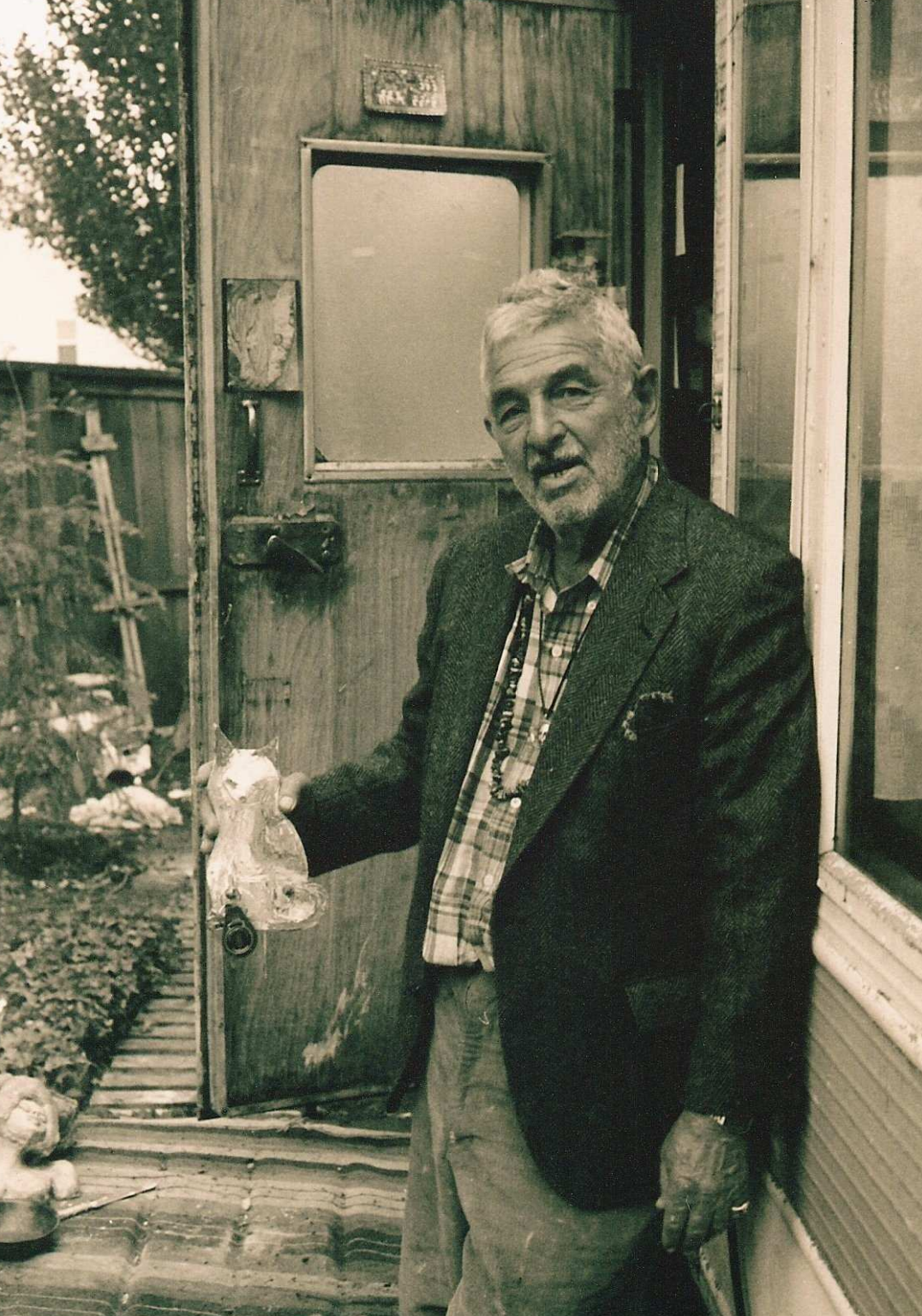


His final years were spent in his small trailer painting each afternoon and writing poetry.



He was a well-known figure around town, nursing a cup of coffee and smoking his pipe at many local restaurants.



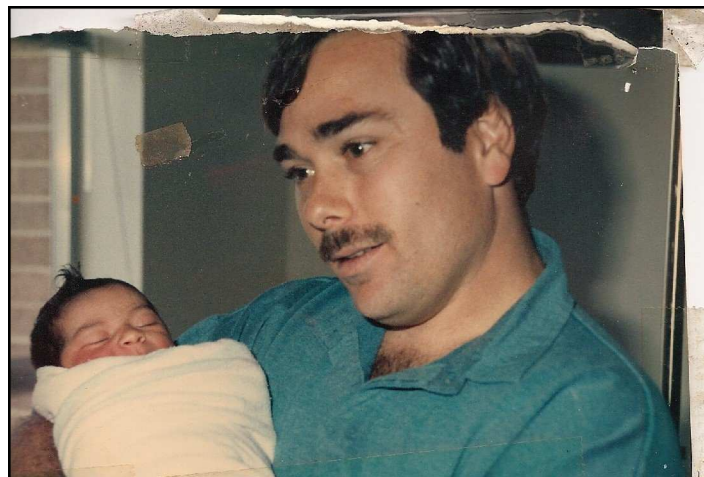


Grandpa Milt passed away in 1991.

In his trailer were the photos of the people he loved, shown on the opposite page including: Lisa, Gary, Ginny, Marilyn, Dave, Nicole, Tamiko and Miya.

Unfortunately, he died before Caity was born, and when Jamie was only a year old. Although they may not have memories of their Grandpa Milt, their love of the arts and athletics, and their appreciation of streams, mountains, and forests, leaves no doubt that they are the granddaughters of Grandpa Milt.

His spirit lives on in all who he touched, and especially in his family who loved him.



Photos in Grandpa Milt's Trailer

My Quiet Place

My Quiet Place
Where is it?
Why is it?

Is it just one Tiny Spot -
A Sanctuary for My Soul-
(which at times grows fatigued -
distressed-disturbed
By a sometimes Cruel World)

Is it in a Redwood grove -
Perhaps-
Carpeted with ferns and Leaves
Soft and Hushed -
Private from the Eyes
of All but GOD?
In a tall, tall Grove.
Standing Tiny and Dwarfed
By the Huge and Silent
Red-barked Trees
Hundreds - maybe Thousands
of Years Old
As Man reckons Time.

From High above.

From the Blue of Heaven
Come Rays of Light
Triangles of Light
Diagonally slanted
Toward the Dark Hushed
EARTH
Below -

Yes - My Quiet Place
Could be There -
In God's own Temple.
In ALL OUTDOORS
I worship HIM
And count my many blessings-

Many Years Have I
As Men and Women Count Time
But only a Flash of Years-
As the Gods count Time.
They alone know the Heavens
The Age of Stars
The Distances between
Tiny Gleams of Light
In the Black of Firmament
Time and Space that has

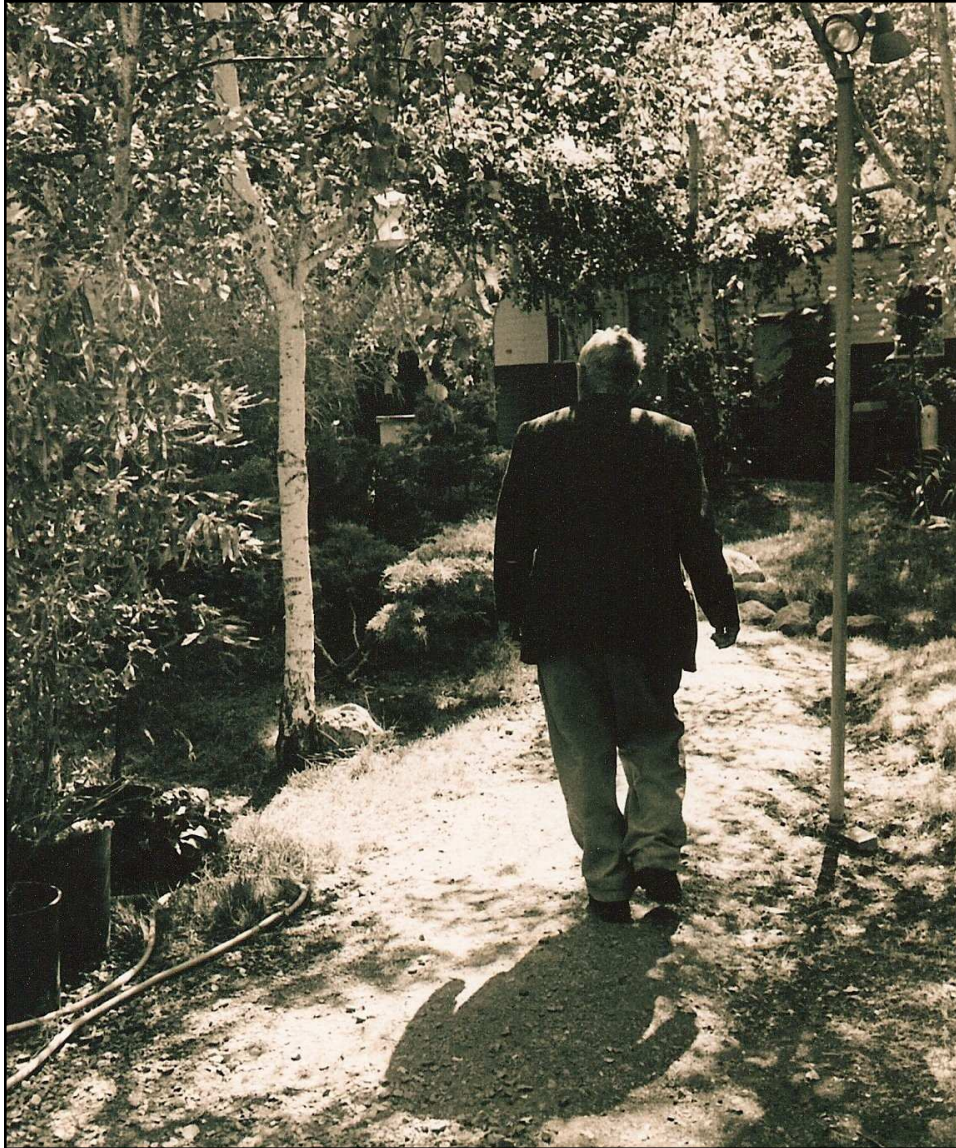
No Limits.

They existed Before And will
exist After
Forever ---

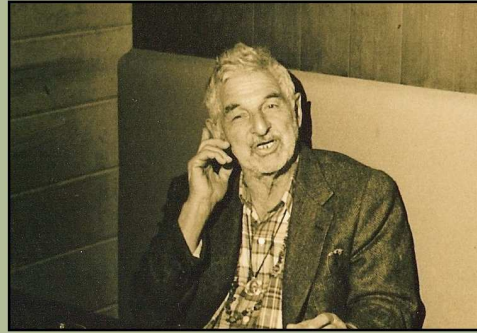
Yes - Friend - Amigo.
There is Peace
In such Facets of Nature
And One rests there
Becoming United with
The Trees- and the Sun
And the STARS.

Slowly - Slowly-
Gradually - Gradually
The Outside Noises Cease
The Inner Noises Cease -
And One has found
His Quiet Place
her Quiet Place
Again.
And Now.

Petaluma - October 19th, 1981







"... Collect instead
the many, many Treasures of the Heart
Collect Smiles
And give your Smile
in full return -
Collect Humor
The many joys of Laughter
Soothe another's pain
And feel your own Heart lighten.

Collect Sunshine
A free gift - to us all
Collect Music and Flowers
And know - forever -
The Treasures of the Heart."

From poem "Treasures of the Heart" by Milton Forrest 1/22/83