

My Friend The Lake

For Anita Morrow

The lake *is* my friend
But, like an autistic child
With a message to send,
May seem random and wild.

So I listen with care
To each movement and sound
Lest the signs of despair
Should us all confound.

And it tells me of stories
Of its pleasures and pain,
And of all of its glories
With storms and with rain.

And it tells me of man
From the beginning of time
How its rivers once ran
Clear and valued like wine.

How we've polluted its waters
Again and again.
Formed scars on all quarters
Till it's tortured insane.

So I've learned of the Lake
And I know of its ways.
When to give. When to take.
When to respect its strong waves.

So we'll both live with passion
Which we'll display to the end,
And I'll express in my fashion
"The Lake . . . is *my* friend".

-jbf-

Written after Lake Ontario had generated some of its strong currents to foil Anita Morrow's 14.5-hour attempt, on 20-21 August 2005, to cross from Grimsby to Oakville on breaststroke. In a video on Channel Swimming, King of the Channel, Michael Read, had listed his 10 "Rules" – one of which was "Remember that the Channel is not your friend". Before the swim, Anita disagreed strongly with this statement, as it related to her planned swim across Lake Ontario. Subsequently, after being thwarted by the Lake, Anita still maintained that "The Lake *Is* My Friend. . . we just don't understand it".

22nd August 2005