

# **The Call of Wildflowers**



**Julie Bloss Kelsey**



# The Call of Wildflowers

Julie Bloss Kelsey

Title IX Press

Cover photo and interior haiga: Julie Bloss Kelsey  
“gentle warmth” artwork: Jenny Kelsey  
author photo: Mark Kelsey

First Published in 2020 by Title IX Press  
North Carolina, USA

Copyright © 2020 Julie Bloss Kelsey

All rights reserved. This book, or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

*This poetry collection is dedicated to Mark, Mikey, and Jenny.*

*I love you with all of my heart.*




pregnant at forty—  
I never knew I missed you  
until you were born

swollen half moon...  
thirty-eight weeks  
and counting

forty weeks along  
but still no baby  
name

in these arms  
like nothing I've ever held before...  
a daughter



An abstract artwork featuring a large, layered heart shape in the center. The heart has a purple outer layer, a teal middle layer, and a small gold-colored inner heart. The background is a light beige surface covered with various colorful splatters and paint marks in shades of pink, purple, blue, and green. There are also several small, irregular pieces of paper or fabric attached to the artwork, including a yellow piece at the top left, a gold piece at the top center, a blue piece at the bottom left, and a green piece at the bottom center. The overall composition is expressive and emotional.

gentle warmth  
as she snuggles  
deeper  
inside my heart  
my daughter

Julie Bloss Kelsey

hiding from our baby  
playing peek-a-boo  
—the moon

second birthday  
everywhere I look  
candy sprinkles

first day of school  
her unscuffed shoes  
scrape the sidewalk

my baby doll  
in my daughter's arms...  
my baby dolls

such a wide smile  
in wax crayon  
I want to become  
the radiant mother  
in my daughter's drawings



after the play date  
glitter  
in the dust pan

Julie Bloss Kelsey

sudden spring heat—  
last year's ballet slippers  
tight on her toes

my daughter's hug  
butterfly wings  
around my heart

first winter storm—  
a thin coat of snow  
on the toddler

preschool field trip—  
he hoists a tiny pumpkin  
onto his shoulder

nativity play...  
the star of Bethlehem  
loses his way

evolution—  
my son draws a dinosaur  
for a girl



thunderstorm warning—  
the insistent pleas  
of small children

spin cycle—  
the endless agitation  
of siblings at play



Julie Bloss Kelsey

blossoms before leaves...  
teaching my children  
to be tactful

on the balcony  
our children dance  
to the rhythm of bubbles

Easter Sunday the hunt for matching socks

above  
the pure white  
Communion dress  
my daughter's  
scowl

a row of saplings  
where the tall pines  
once stood  
I take my oldest  
for driving lessons

snow squall—  
my teen gives me  
a dubious look

familiar songs  
drifting up the stairs—  
over college break  
our eldest rediscovers  
the ukulele

midnight cough—  
the scent of menthol  
sneaks into our bedroom



popsicle sticks  
and pastel chalk  
rainbows...  
at least some things  
remain the same

Julie Bloss Kelsey

family dog the warm spot on the ottoman

as news of war  
leaves me helpless...  
she hands me  
construction paper  
and stickers



a light dusting of snow  
around the edges  
of the windowpanes...  
our hearts remember  
the little things

family photo—  
four smiles  
and a smirk

*In Remembrance of Adam and Erin*

first sonogram  
so excited to see you  
we didn't notice  
your missing heartbeat

the silence

remembering my miscarriages Mother's Day

walking the labyrinth  
with my never-born child  
...the call of wildflowers

Julie Bloss Kelsey



*The author gratefully wishes to acknowledge the following publications, where many of these poems first appeared:*

*A Hundred Gourds*

*Atlas Poetica*

*brass bell: a haiku journal*

*Bright Stars, An Organic Tanka Anthology*

*cattails*

*Englyn: Journal of Four Line Poetry*

*Failed Haiku*

*Frogpond*

*hedgerow: a journal of small poems*

*Seven by Twenty*

*Shambhala Times Midwinter Haiku Contest*

*The Bamboo Hut*

*The Haiku Calendar Competition, Snapshot Press*

*The Heron's Nest*

*A Thousand Voices, Tanka Society of America Members' Anthology*



Julie Bloss Kelsey began writing haiku after the birth of her third child in 2009. She used to sit in a comfy chair, nursing her daughter, while staring out the window and composing poetry. This gradually evolved into frantically typing haiku, tanka, and other short forms into an iPhone while shuttling her children to various activities. Much of her work can be found on Twitter, where she posts as [@MamaJoules](https://twitter.com/MamaJoules). Julie is married and lives in Maryland with her husband, her two younger kids, one dog, and three fish.

"From pregnancy to college, Julie shares moments with her kids that so many of us experience and forget. Even if you haven't been a mother, these poems will make you feel like you are one. It's that easy to get caught up in reading her work. Anyone who reads this book will see these poems as the gems they are, and a testament of a mother's love."

- Susan Burch, author of *Keeping Score: Angry Tanka*, Vice President of the Tanka Society of America, & 2018 Touchstone Award Winner for Individual Poem

"Julie Bloss Kelsey offers up the gentle joys and fragile moments of parenthood with insight, humor, and bravery. From daily aggravations to the push-and-pull of watching her children grow, she lays bare her heart, writing as someone who has been in the trenches, and has come up not hardened, but open and receptive to life's sweeter things."

- Tia Haynes, author of *Leftover Ribbon* (shortlist, 2019 Touchstone Distinguished Book Award)