

UPROOTED: *Searching for Serenity*

by Michelle McCloskey-Alicea

www.uprootedpoetry.com

UPROOTED: Searching for Serenity is a stirring four-part collection of poems that recounts the long and arduous path of survival she and her family journeyed after the War on Terror hit close to home.

On June 8, 2008 Michelle's younger brother, Kevin McCloskey, a soldier in the United States Army, was struck by an IED in Afghanistan. Severely wounded by the impact, Kevin suffered a multitude of injuries. Most significantly, Kevin lost both of his legs. Traumatized and devastated, Michelle found it utterly impossible to describe this tragedy.

And poetry became her voice.

*"Overcome by sadness, there was no conversation.
Speechless: silenced by devastation."*

~ *Speechless* | Michelle McCloskey-Alicea

In the ensuing months, she composed countless poems about the grief, recovery and rehabilitation process. Ranging from rhymed to free verse, invented to traditional – Michelle wrote whenever possible. Writing to release emotions, express fears and question the reality of an unfair situation, her poems became a cathartic channel to heal a broken past.



IRONCUTTER MEDIA, LLC

Phone: 570.220.0026 • Email: info@ironcuttermedia.com • www.ironcuttermedia.com

Uprooted: Searching for Serenity
A Poetry Collection
By Michelle McCloskey-Alicea
Published by Ironcutter Media, LLC
Distributed by Ingram Book Company
Pre-Release Date: November 11, 2009
ISBN 10: 0-9788417-1-9
ISBN 13: 978-0-9788417-1-3
5.5 x 8.5 in.
\$15.95 USD

Her poetry addresses a variety of topics. Some detail her brother's battle and recovery. Several reflect the emotional states of Kevin and her family. Other poems honor the military's service and sacrifice. And further verses employ nature to symbolize the journey of Kevin and her family.

Uprooted: Searching for Serenity is a four-part compilation of these poems. Coursing the experiences of her family being emotionally uprooted by the tragedy of war and the ensuing journey of survival, revelation, and lastly, their search for serenity, this beautifully evocative collection is capped by Michelle's tribute to her brother and our country's service-members and families.

Therapeutic for Michelle and her family, she hopes her poetry will help other families cope with similar tragedies. Although the poetry is personal and individualized to her situation, it fundamentally speaks to the human condition of survival.

Michelle is donating a portion of proceeds from this collection to the Wounded Warrior Project in honor of the tremendous outreach and support her family received from this charitable organization.

Visit www.uprootedpoetry.com to learn more about this organization and others like it in the Resources for Wounded Heroes and their Families Section.

ABOUT *the author*

www.uprootedpoetry.com

A MODERN POET

What is a modern poet?

mod_ern

Definition: Characteristic or expressive of recent times or the present; contemporary or up-to-date.

po_et

Definition: A person who has the gift of poetic thought, imagination, and creation, together with eloquence of expression.

Michelle McCloskey-Alicea embodies the essence of a modern poet, mother, and educator.

A native of Philadelphia, Michelle infuses three things into her life of which she is most passionate: children, family, and writing. Michelle's passion for poetry began in high school. It was an expressive outlet for her. Through mostly rhymed poems, she could express ideas, feelings and worries that were often difficult to share with others. In college, Michelle composed numerous poems based on life experiences, interactions, and emotional struggles. It was a passion, hobby and therapeutic release.

Yet, as time went on, Michelle found she was writing poetry far less frequently. Life events – births, engagements, marriages, deaths – inspired her to write, but she did not compose poetry as consistently as she once did. But in June of 2008, that changed, as did her life and that of her family's. Her brother, Kevin McCloskey, was hit by an IED, and only courage, love and a determined will to thrive would help them all survive.

She began penning poems to help cope with the dueling emotions and taxing challenges they all faced, beginning with *Strong Heavy Boots*. The compilation's last poem, entitled *Tunnels*, was written while en route to visiting her publisher and encapsulates the lingering feelings of anxiety and fear bestowed by trauma.

Michelle shares her inner thoughts and inspiration for writing these poems in *Window to the Words*, found in her book and website at www.uprootedpoetry.com.

Michelle attended Penn State University and graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Psychology and a Minor in Sociology. An educator for 10 years, she launched her teaching career after earning a Masters degree in Elementary Education at Temple University. Michelle truly loves interacting with children and she finds

great joy in working with youth as a soccer coach and educator. Some of her most rewarding experiences have involved teaching children the craft of writing, particularly poetry. She finds it empowering to see children learn to appreciate and understand the nuances of this genre, and exciting when students develop a desire to write expressively, creatively, and with vivid language.

Michelle resides in Philadelphia, the city she loves, with her husband and three children.



Uprooted: Searching for Serenity
A Poetry Collection
By Michelle McCloskey-Alicea
Published by Ironcutter Media, LLC
Distributed by Ingram Book Company
Pre-Release Date: November 11, 2009
ISBN 10: 0-9788417-1-9
ISBN 13: 978-0-9788417-1-3
5.5 x 8.5 in.
\$15.95 USD



CONTACT MICHELLE:

Phone: 267.402.0320 • Email: michelle@ironcuttermedia.com • www.ironcuttermedia.com

SELECTIONS *from the collection*

www.uprootedpoetry.com

STRONG HEAVY BOOTS

*Strong heavy boots laced up to the knee –
A symbol of power for all to see.
Going to places we cannot imagine,
Performing duties that few could fathom.*

*Representing a legacy for oh so long.
These worn, heavy boots — powerful and strong.
Protecting its owners from the dangers and dread,
Shielding from weather and debris shed.
Unrecognized friends to the soldiers' feet
As they walk through villages and dangerous streets.*

*The sight of these boots may seem normal to us.
But in other places they're the beacon of trust.
For they stand for more than protection, you see,
To many, they're the transporters of tranquility.*

*As long as they're laced, the boots have a mission.
But once they're removed, they leave people wishing –
That strong heavy boots would return to their aid
Because they carry peace for those left afraid.
It's tragic for all when boots are worn down,
For the loss of their footsteps is a haunting sound.*

*Empty heavy boots are a frightening sight –
For they symbolize a problem or a soldier's plight.
Strong heavy boots sadly sit by the door
Since their use in this world is no more.*

WINDOW TO THE WORDS...About *Strong Heavy Boots*

Strong Heavy Boots was the first poem written after Kevin's incident. Not having yet seen my brother, it was composed en route to Texas to visit Kevin. Hijacked by anxiety on the flight, images of boots kept flashing through my mind. I found it haunting that there was one less pair of boots in this world. Reflecting on what this meant, I wrote *Strong Heavy Boots*.

WINDOW TO THE WORDS...About *Home*

Home stemmed from a church homily in which the priest stressed the importance of the home. It prompted me to reflect upon the notion of home – not the physical home, but the emotional and psychological structure to which we belong.

Home was also featured in the novel, *Beyond the Wall: The Journey Home*, by Alivia Tagliaferri, published by Ironcutter Media, LLC.

HOME

*Home is the place where one's heart resides –
A secure dwelling with a framework of pride.
Physically made of bricks and stones,
Emotionally cemented by the bonds of the home.
With rose-tinted windows that allow sunlight,
And doors that barricade the dangers of night.
Decorated and embellished over the years
With love and compassion; laughter and tears.
It envelops the heart, the spirit, the mind
With an identity that's truly one of a kind.
But the house modernizes and changes with time
As life experiences shape its design.*

*The place where most of life lessons are learned,
It's the home to which one longs to return.
Especially when life gets heavy and weighted –
The home is the remedy so dearly awaited.
For it's the place that restores and revives
The inner spirit trying to survive.
For the home is not just a structural space,
It's family, support, and a welcome embrace.*

*A temporary structure with a permanent hold
Of one's mind, one's heart, one's spirit, one's soul.*



IRONCUTTER MEDIA, LLC

Phone: 570.220.0026 • Email: info@ironcuttermedia.com • www.ironcuttermedia.com