

Embracing Innocence: Jake Goertzen's Sculptures



by Donald Stoesz and Peter Goertzen

Introduction

In a recent e-mail, Jake Goertzen contrasted his sculptures with the cerebral focus of a fellow artist. Jake suggested that his artwork was more emotive, linked to matters of the heart. Many people have been deeply moved by some of his sculptures, feeling that Jake's art resonates deeply with their own experiences. His sculptures arise in direct relation to the emotional, religious, and physical abuse he witnessed and experienced as a young child.

When Jake was forty years old, he began therapy in order to understand how these childhood experiences had affected him. He began sculpting in wax and clay in order to express his feelings. This combination of psychotherapy and art enabled Jake to move from owning negative memories of hurt he had experienced as a child, to embracing deeply spiritual and joyous aspects of life.

Let us hear what Jake has to say:¹

My work has been described many times as deeply moving. People have written me letters

and poetry, filled with deep insights that my work awoke in them.

Others have spoken to me in person, total strangers often weeping and being thankful for the feelings that they can finally share with another person. In the past, I have named the exhibit: *Journey of the Human Spirit*. I address the things that shape human character and create the core of human personality. One person told me, "Please do not ever stop doing this work."

I have also written songs for several of my sculptures and paintings. These interpret the sculptures and paintings in lyrics and with music. In the exhibit the music and lyrics would be displayed side by side.

The best way of introducing Jake's artwork is to consider an article that the *Canadian Mennonite Reporter* published in 1989, in which Jake spoke about the crucified childhood he had experienced as a child:²

Emotionally, it was a slow death of choking on anger, hurt, and loneliness. Love was an unspoken sentiment.

¹ Jake Goertzen, *Email correspondence*, December 2, 2024.

² Jake Goertzen, *My crucified child: The horrors of a Christian Upbringing*, Canadian Mennonite Reporter, 19:17, September 4, 1989, 10-11.

It had no personal significance. Not that I was spanked daily or that I was hated all the time. It was rather an overwhelming indifference and neglect of my emotional needs that were so awful. Understanding, closeness and love were in a faraway domain with the heavenly Father. There was a lot of talk about the love of God, but precious little was felt by us people.

This article was the result of psychotherapy sessions that had Jake start whittling away on wax candles with a paring knife. These counselling interviews made Jake realize that there was a lot about his childhood that he had repressed. What he initially thought as having been a reasonably well-adjusted, Christian upbringing represented an idealized version of his past. These memories did not take into account the dreams, nightmares, depression, loneliness, self-hatred, and compulsive behaviours in which Jake engaged.

Jake's subsequent sculpting in clay and terra cotta produced such works as *Baby in a Cage*, *Baby in Terror*, *Hold Me*, *Modern Madonna (with Child)*, *Broken Boy*, *Man in Horror*, and *Family on the Edge*. Each of these sculptures portrayed in visual form the isolation, dejectedness, physical hurt, and anguish that Jake had experienced.

In contrast to those darker-themed pieces, Jake also produced *Infant Joy*, *Mother with Newborn*, and *Nursing Mother* during this time, in order to emphasize the importance of touch, affection, and nurturing between mother and child. Extremes are evident in the above sculptures.

These two forces pulling him in two directions - maternal separation experiences on one hand, and bonding he longed for on the other – caused him to transcend, as it were, into a higher plane deep within his heart. He was searching for deeper understanding and balance in the dichotomous pain and joy. And there he discovered a tremendous insight about life, an ideal that has in fact helped shape his worldview in a foundational way. Jake articulates the innocent child's view of engaging in life in his commentary on *Family on the Edge*:

Children often possess great wisdom that knows that conflict is not how life should be. The child is not drawn into the turmoil going on around him; rather he is connected to a higher state of spirituality, which is reinforced by the peaceful being above him.

In reflecting on the painting, *When I was Lost*, Jake says:

In spite of the fact that our personal history may have been influenced and clouded by neglect or abuse, our central core is a pure spiritual being that calls us out of our despair to engage in creative and joyous living.

Jake discovered during his psychotherapy sessions that composing music was another way in which he could express his feelings. With quite a number of art pieces that he

produced, Jake wrote a song that expressed feelings about that piece.³

In *Stolen Dreams*, Jake sings about the fact that his life was taken away from him when he was a child. Jake asks for someone to be his friend, to bring back his dream of happier days, and to stand by him.

In *Give Us a Hand*, Jake asks whether anyone can hear the children who are crying in the night because they are wounded, sad, fearful, lonely, and in pain. Courage is needed to end the silence, to reach out a hand in order to tell the truth, and to provide a shining light so that a child's aching heart can be healed.

Infant Joy Lullaby and *Family Lullaby* speak about the first few days of life in which a baby experiences joy as their mother nurses and embraces them, and their father acts as a solid anchor in their care and protection. Jake used the lyrics of William Blake's poem, *Infant Joy*,⁴ to compose music for *Infant Joy Lullaby*.

A young mother from Georgia, Rabia Hakima, read Jake's piece about his crucified childhood. She was so moved that she wrote a letter to Jake, sharing how she had become pregnant as a result of being raped by her stepfather. In spite of these tragic circumstances, Rabia decided to raise her newborn son, Salim, on her own.

Rabia and her son visited Jake several times in Manitoba. They became friends. Jake attended her graduation from university with a master's degree in English literature. Jake describes her journey as a legacy of love in his *Song for Rabia*. Rabia changed the world for good by "loving a child to life."

In *Let the Spirit Shine*, Jake refers to the fact that a child is raised within the context of a global home. By lending a helping hand, no one needs to starve or be alone. Everyone can live in joy, warmth, and peace.

Jake's growing confidence in composing music and self-assuredness in identity are demonstrated in five other songs, *Piper's Song*, *When I was Lost*, *Spirit Child*, *Song of Love*, and *If There is Light*.

Building on the lyrics of William Blake's poem, *Introduction*,⁶ Jake sings in *The Piper's Song* about a musician bringing merry cheer and a child weeping with joy upon hearing the happy song.

A child is the centre of attention in *When I was Lost*. Children draw the listener in by their innocence, "so pure, pristine, and good," Jake states. "They act as a Spirit Guide, shining the light of Beauty and Truth."

³ Jake describes this process in *Background Notes About the Songs*, unpublished, 8 pages.

⁴ William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (Trianon Press, 1967), 25.

⁶ William Blake, *Songs of Innocence*, 4.

Spirit Child highlights the ways in which a child's joy and love give life to the mother and father as they wait for the day when their joy becomes fully grown.

Song of Love honours the rite of marriage as two people bind themselves together in sweet embrace, no matter what the future holds.

In *If There is Light*, Jake sings about the fact that harmony of relationships and justice in the world will prevail if there is light, love, and beauty in the soul.

Two final songs sum up the growing maturity of Jake as an artist, songwriter, and person who has begun to resolve previous emotional obstacles, and to develop a positive outlook for the future. *Journey of the Human Spirit* encapsulates Jake's deeply spiritual vision of life. "We resurrect our souls by drinking from the fountain of life." "We can live in the land of light by loving others." "We are all on a human journey of moving toward wholeness and completion."

Jake's sculptures, *Song of Joy 1* and 2, along with *Fountain of Life*, show figures rising from the sea in which they are immersed, and stretching their arms upward as signs of freedom and creativity.

The sculptures, *Venus in Bloom* and *Dancing Girl*, are similar in expression. Jake refers explicitly to *Venus in Bloom* as

"struggling toward a greater consciousness" in her personal and spiritual development. *Dancing Girl* shows her arms out stretched in a posture of elegance and grace. These sculptures reflect Jake's mature articulations of the human soul.

A final song, *Beautiful Spirit*, refers to Jake's personal discovery of love and devotion. Jake met Junita in 1997 and they married in 2006. The song is about Junita's compassion for others, the beauty that rests in her soul, and the measure and treasure that represents her life. Jake sculpted a bust of Junita as a way of honouring her life.

Let us return to the story of restoration that shaped Jake's life and artwork. In 1992, he wrote a second article for the *Canadian Mennonite Reporter*, entitled, *Journey Toward Healing: The Sequel*.⁸ Jake documents how he and his mother were able to speak openly about the feelings of neglect that Jake had felt as a young child. They cried together about the hurt that had occurred. His mother asked for Jake's forgiveness. Jake experienced a closeness to her that he had not experienced in a long time.

Jake also spoke to his father about the corporal punishment that he had received. His father related how he had been physically punished in the same way when he was young. His father spoke about the fact that he had not been held as a child. Jake relates that "a great burden was lifted for him and for me when we both were able to say what we had always wanted from each other, to embrace, to cry our sadness, to say words

⁸Jake Goertzen, *The Journey toward Healing: The Sequel*, Mennonite Reporter, 22:5, March 9, 1992, 11.

of love that we had never said before, to feel closeness we had never had.”⁹

Jake’s journey toward healing is evident in a variety of sculptures. Besides the three intimate portrayals of mother and child in *Infant Joy*, *Mother with Newborn*, and *Nursing Mother*, Jake produced *Spirit Child 1* and *2*, *Taking Flight*, *Dave and Connie Goertzen Family*, *Fountain of Life*, and *Song of Joy 1* and *2*. These sculptures portray the joy of living when people discover the essential freedom to explore, discover, create, and embrace life. The *Fountain of Life* and *Song of Joy* show a figure with arms upraised. *Spirit Child* and *Taking Flight* show an infant and dancer reaching toward the heavens.

Four of Jake’s larger artworks expand on this theme of renewed energy and motivation. *Dancing Girl* evokes a sense of balance, grace, poise, and elegance. The face of *Saint Francis* exudes expectancy, serenity, compassion, and youthful eagerness. The erect posture of *Chief Keeshkemaquah* commands respect for a man of wisdom, intelligence, honesty, and vision. The statue of *Dr. Henry Marshall* portrays him as a gentle, sensitive scientist, dedicated to the challenging work of breeding new varieties of roses.

One way of understanding Jake’s sensitivities to the woundedness of life experiences, alongside his exuberance and sense of contentment, is to listen to what his brother Peter

has to say about the matter. Peter set up a website to display Jake’s artwork.¹⁰

In his first email, Peter suggests that:¹¹

Jake is a complex thinker who is, in deeply spiritual ways, moved by both moral principles of justice and emotional realities of humanity, both for people in cultural contexts generally - and for individuals, especially mothers and infant children.

His interpretation of life is one of seeking truth, and declaring it - rather boldly in many of his earlier works. In subtle shapes and other artistic elements, through undercurrent-like nuances, cuddled in the message that calls from within to the viewer of his art, a harmony emerges.

That resonates with people who are open to and appreciative of artistic expression that stimulates deep reflection. The sum and product of Jake’s life experiences are discernable to lovers of life. The art itself seems to continue to live in the psyche of those who are sensitive enough to be moved by, for example, the beautiful innocence in a mother’s eyes as she cares for her nursing infant, as much by the sincere visage and posture of a young Francis showing a humble devotion

⁹ Jake Goertzen, *The Journey toward Healing*, 11.

¹⁰ Jake Goertzen’s Sculptures, www.jakethesculptor.com

¹¹ Peter Goertzen, *Email correspondence*, November 9, 2024.

to serve, as much by the raw, majestic, natural power of the elegant bison.

In addition, if the respective, above examples represent "ying" in Chinese philosophy, Jake's works include the opposite counterpart, the "yang:" for example, in works like the indifferent mother whose desperate child is clinging to her legs, like the angry father who is beating his child, or the selfish couple who is splitting up the family, and like the fading glory of the deconstructed animals.

Consider the combining of these interconnected concepts in Jake's act of immortalizing simple, lovely flowers, petals, and leaves as they are transformed into solid steel figures and in railings, gates, and arbors.

Indeed his works in metal are powerful expressions of an artist who is devoted to creating a lasting legacy of his person. Finally, all of Jake's fascinating abstract art makes us marvel with childlike curiosity and imagination about the gift he possesses.

Thus from the soft humanity that has been touched by the Creator's likeness, to stark declarations of everlasting laws of nature, Jake's works teach us that he has been a successful

student of life. I'd suggest that since being the "prince" of CMBC, he has managed his artistic realm with dedicated passion and consistency, which has the potential to move every aesthete to the core of his being.

In his second email, Peter has this to say:¹²

The evocative nature of his early work takes a viewer through very deep emotions, but in their expression as finished works, as I understand, they also helped Jake himself struggle successfully through trauma - and that projected and became embodied in his later pieces. The resulting benefits were, as it were, gifts to many people who viewed and meditated on them. After the comparatively stark early works, a beauty emerged in creations of nature, and a more positive outlook becomes apparent. Ultimately, in more abstract ways, Jake's art calls out to (or hears from) the celestial and universal energies of perfect form. So there is much to unpack in trying to discover how Jake's heart and soul have changed - and conversely - how he has created an art form in its own right.

Peter's references to Jake's later works as "immortalizing simple, lovely flowers, petals, and leaves as they are transformed into solid steel figures," and to his abstract art as reflecting "celestial and universal energies of perfect form" bring us to a consideration of Jake's more recent oeuvre.

¹²Peter Goertzen, *Email correspondence*, December 2, 2024.

First, one could say that Jake's artwork has become more commercialized. His work with railings, arbors, arches, trellises, and gates has all been done as a result of various commissions. Jake has combined the rudimentary requirements of functional metal works with an artistry of form. A tree is outlined in one of his gates along with a peregrine falcon. Various railings reveal a variety of roses and petals, while the arches display angels and mermaids, not to mention a functional confessional with operative doors that stands seven feet tall.

His ornamental works feature a variety of petals, flowers, and lilies in various displays. Some of his flowers stand over fifteen feet high, while others are brightly coloured orange, pink, and yellow.

Jake's commissions to sculpt wildlife have resulted in some fairly large works, including a bison, an eagle, a peacock, and a great gray owl. His seven-foot-high buffalo has become a roadside attraction near Saint Andrews, Manitoba. His great gray owl, nearly ten feet long, stands at the entrance of one of the private properties in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. Jake's twelve-foot-long, two-thousand-pound eagle rests on top of a seventy-eight foot high steel tree, located on the former Indian Residential School grounds near Portage la Prairie. The fifteen-foot-long peacock adds a nice touch of decoration to a couple's garden.

These realistic portrayals of plants, flowers, and wildlife have given way in recent years to some abstract works. Jake has constructed a two-foot square, stainless steel cube, in the middle of which he placed concentric rings and a crystal ball. This work, entitled *Balance*, was a commission by one of the financial companies located in downtown Winnipeg.

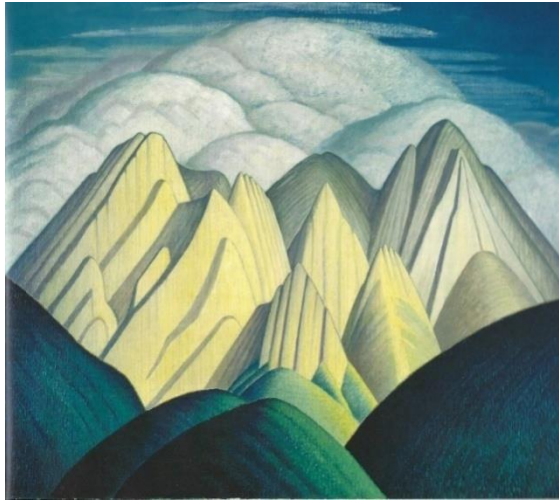
Jake has constructed a futuristic looking square metal cube, on one side of which is featured a computer circuit board. He has made six intertwined metal rings that stand twelve feet high. Jake has constructed a steel globe of the world, in the middle of which he placed a family consisting of a father, mother, and two children, cast in bronze.

All of these works are reminiscent of another Canadian artist, Lawren Harris, who spent the first part of his career painting mountains and snowscapes. Dissatisfied with what he had produced, Harris turned to abstract art to portray what he considered the essence of his spiritualistic transcendentalism.¹³ Harris felt that realism in and of itself was inadequate in expressing the sublime core of reality.

One could say that a similar progression has happened in Jake's artworks. He has turned to increasingly abstract works in order to express harmony, balance, circularity, and a smoothness that are hard to replicate in more realistic forms of art.

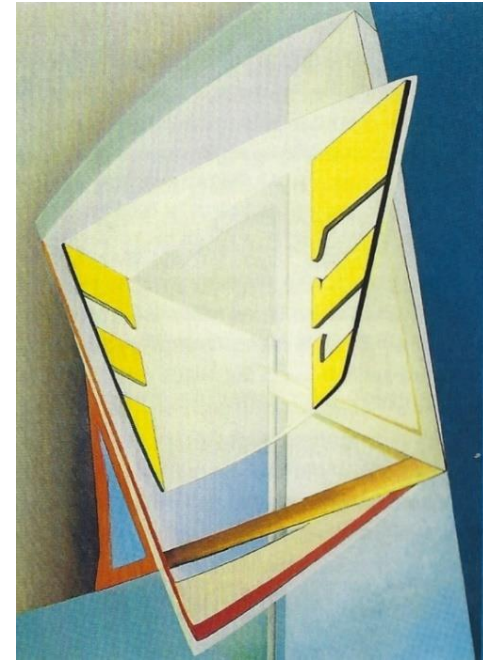
¹³*The Idea of North: The Paintings of Lawren Harris*, curated by Steve Martin (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, n.d.), 131.

Figure 1: *Untitled: Mountains near Jasper*¹⁴



In conclusion, one could say that Jake has progressed from an emotive, heartfelt portrayal of childhood experiences to realistic recreations of people, plants and wildlife, to abstract construction of symmetry and wholeness. While the latter adjectives are more conceptual in nature, Jake's earlier works have much more to do with feelings and emotions.

Figure 2: *Composition 10*¹⁵



¹⁴*The Idea of North*, 123.

¹⁵*The Idea of North*, 131.

IV. Secret Suffering of the Modern Child



Baby in Cage

Medium: Terra Cotta

Dimensions: 5 H x 3 W x 4 L (inches)

In 1989 Di Brandt, a well-known Manitoba poet, sent Jake a poem in manuscript form. It was entitled, "I am finding myself again in the healed heart."¹⁶ The poem is about her memory of having been struck by a caregiver as an infant. This piece shows the baby crib from the infant's point of view. This poem moved Jake to tears whenever he read it, so Jake decided to create two sculptures to pay tribute to Di's work. The other sculpture is called "Baby in Terror." (1989)

¹⁶ Di Brandt, *Agnes in the Sky* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1990).

Baby in Terror

Medium: terra-cotta (1989)

Like *Baby in a Cage*,” this sculpture was made in response to Di Brandt’s poem, “I am finding myself again in the healed heart.” Jake was overwhelmed by empathy just thinking how a baby feels when it is treated harshly or cruelly. Like any newly born living or newly hatched creature it needs loving care and tenderness to thrive. Any aggressive feeling or action can only be felt as life-threatening.



Abandoned Child

Medium: Terra-cotta

Dimensions 6 inches high
(1988)

“After the therapy session, I went to a restaurant and observed a young couple with young children.

I saw how the cues of the infant in the carriage to be held were being ignored. It broke my heart to see this unfolding before me.”



Hold Me

Medium: Terra Cotta - Oven-Baked Clay

Dimensions: 13 H x 12 W x 10 L (inches)

The innate non-verbal language of infants is wonderful to see. The gestures and the look in their eyes and faces are very clear in their intent - if we are emotionally open to our own memories as infants. When an infant's initial cues are ignored, the more desperate method is to cry to get a needed response. (1991)



Song for Rabia

Jake Goertzen

♩ = 100

M m m m m m m m m m m m m m m m. You
m m m m m m m m m m m m m m m m. The

hold your child so close to you and stroke him ten - der - ly.
pow - er of your love, my dear, has changed the world for good.

Your son Sa - lim so full of life; your beau - ti - ful young
A gen - tle love pours from your soul; no grea - ter love than

boy. this. To love him when your heart was crushed, to love when
To love him when your heart was crushed, to love when

full of dread. To bear your load though si - news strain, to
full of dread. To bear the load though si - news strain, to

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love a - gainst the odds. Hm m m m m m. A Your
love a - gainst the odds. Hm m m m m m.

bla-zing star soars through the night, em - bla-zoned on my life. You've
life of love's a shi - ning light, you've changed the world for good. Your

loved a child to life, my dear a le - ga - cy of love, a le - ga - cy of
love will ne - ver be in vain, his life will pass it on, his life will pass it

love. You've changed the world for good, you've loved a child to life; your
on.

love is not in vain; his life will pass it on; his life will pass it

on.

Let Your Spirit Shine

Jake Goertzen

$\text{♩} = 112$

Raise a
If we
Love our

child in love, Raise a child in joy; Such a
share all things, in our glo-bal home; no one
mo-ther Earth, it's our on-ly home; we must

gift of life, in our hands. Such a child be-ongs,
needs to starve, big or small. Build the earth for all,
care for her, big or small. We will not pol-lute,

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and the child grows strong, and the light will grow,
one big fa-mi-ly; we can work and play,
we will not a-buse, o-ther li-ving things,

in his heart.
side by side.
big or small. Hm hm hm Let your Spi-rit shine, let your

heart be warm; lend a hel-ping hand, big or small. We can live in

joy, we can live in peace, in our glo-bal home, side by side.



Dressing Up

Medium: Bronze on Marble Base

Dimensions: 5.5 inches high

This sculpture is the first of a series under the title of *Canadiana*. These will include a boy on a skateboard, a skinny hockey player, children with a dog on a toboggan, and working people. During the early phase as a sculptor Jake made a number of sketches in plasticine and clay as part of his *To Love a Child* work. The joyful and imaginative nature of childhood fun inspired him to try to capture it in a sculpture. There are a number of other small sculptures of children at play which he hopes to cast in bronze as well.



Boy on a Skateboard



Children on toboggan

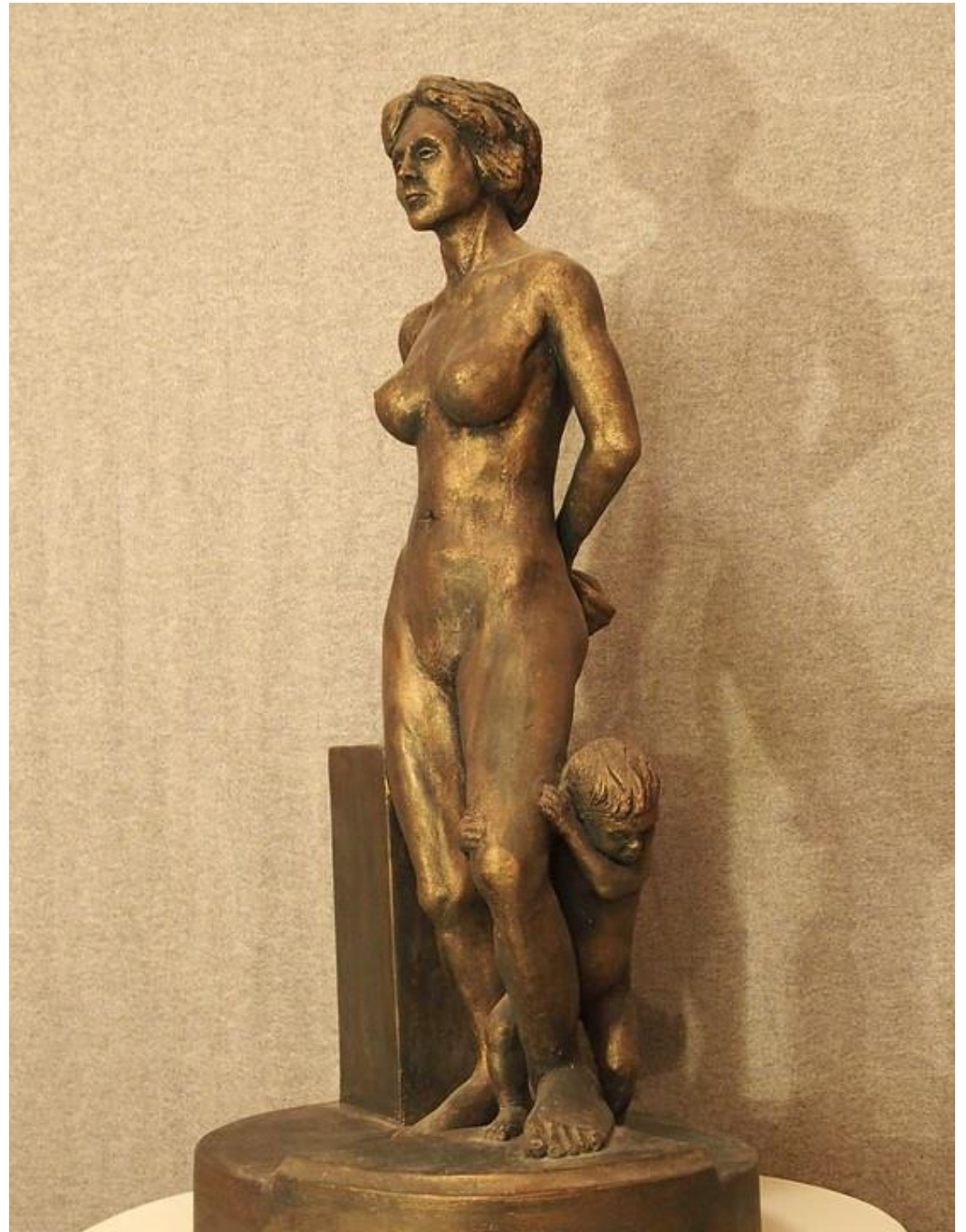


Modern Madonna (with child)

Medium: Terra Cotta

Dimensions: 28 H x 14 W x 12 L
(inches)

Companion piece to Mother with newborn, this piece shows the lack of bonding between the pair. While a bond between mother and child is the foundation of healthy neurological, physical, and psychological development, this piece illustrates a great emotional distance between them. Various details in this view portray a strained relationship, such as her postured stance and the hands behind the back; these details show her resolute coldness that prevents a bond between her and her child. (1992)



Stolen Dreams

Jake Goertzen

As
One

I looked o'er the world to - day, I heard their lo - ne - ly
had a dream when was born, a dream of hap - pi - er
voice be - comes a cho - rus strong, one seed grows in - to a

15

cries; five - hun - dred mil - lion chil - dren called, here's what they
days; but some - one stole my dream a - way, please bring it
tree; my dream be - comes re - a - li - ty, if you will

21

said to me: My mo - ther's name is po - ver -
back to me. The voice of one who speaks for
stand by me. The pow'r of one who acts in

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27

- ty, my fa - ther's name is greed, my name is ma - ny
me brings back my dream to me, please be my friend and
love, the pow'r of one brave heart, the pow'r of one can

33

sto - len dreams, won't you please stand by me?"
stand by me, bring back my dream to me.
change the world. Please won't you stand by me?

40



Broken Boy

Medium: Terra Cotta
Dimensions: 13 H x 11 W
x20 L (inches)

Probably the most disturbing piece for many people, this sculpture is part of a body of work entitled, "To Love a Child," which depicts children and parents in relationships.

Family on the Edge (father view)

Medium: Terra Cotta on a
background of plaster.'

Dimensions: 20 H x 8 W x 34
L (inches)

The father pulling in one
direction.





Family on the Edge (mother view)

Medium: Medium: Terra Cotta
background of plaster.

Dimensions: 20 H x 8 W x 34 L
(inches)

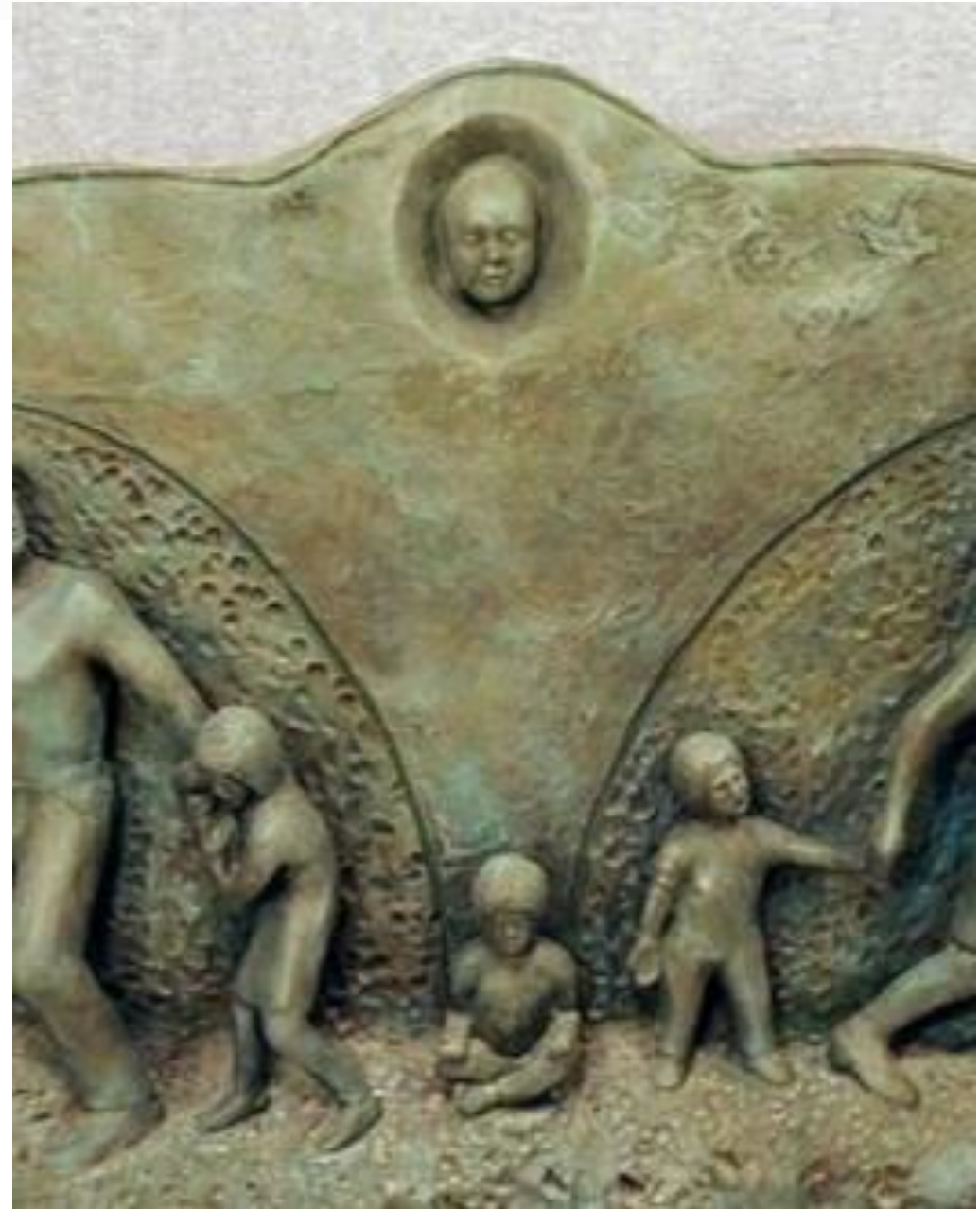
The mother pulling in the
opposite direction.

Family on the Edge

Medium: Terra Cotta on a background of plaster

Dimensions: 20 H x 8 W x 34 L (inches)

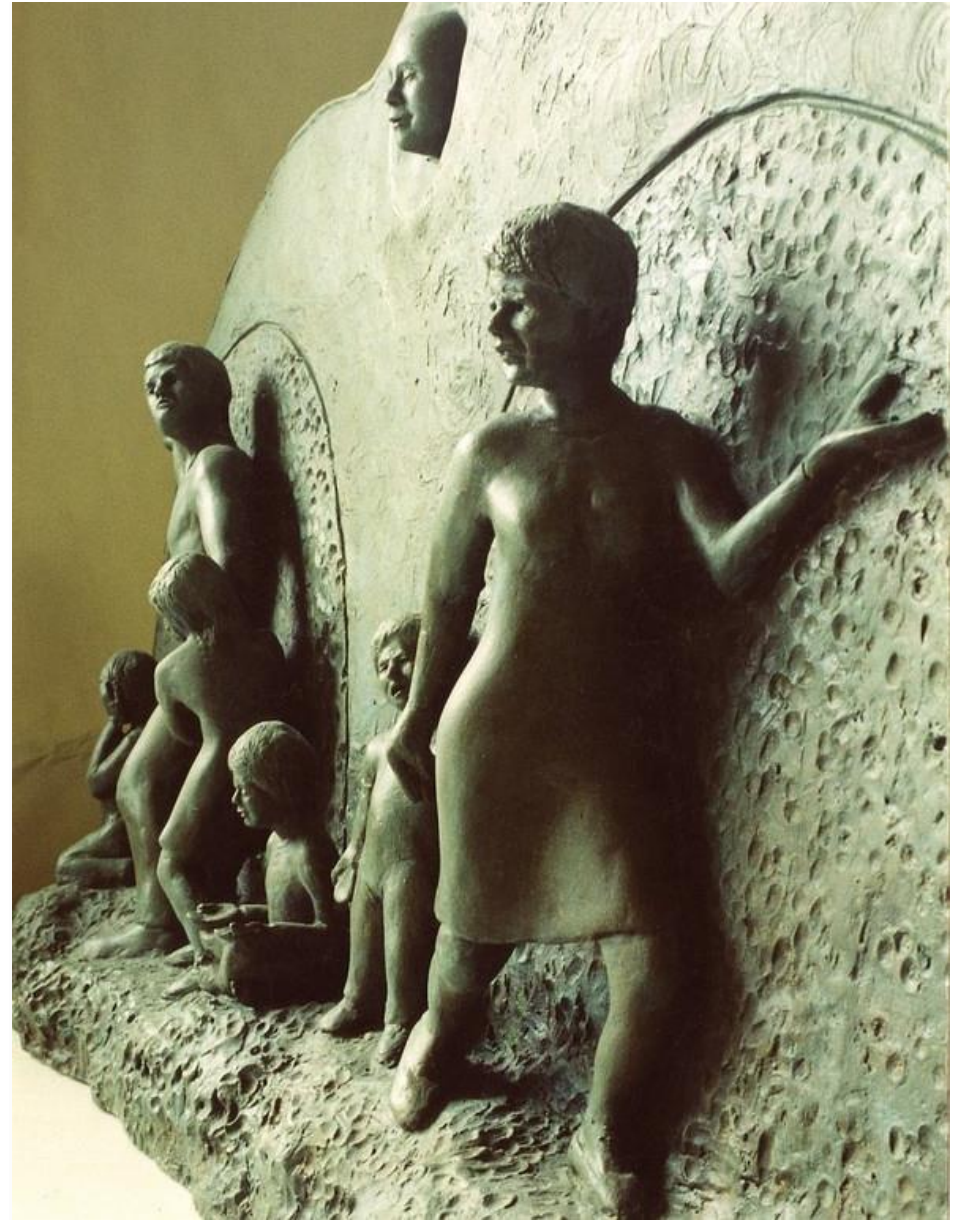
Quite early in their relationship, Jake's late wife Junita noted the strong emotion in some of his work. She suggested he try to capture this all too common family breakdown in a sculpture. Although suffering is certainly depicted in this piece, you may see that Jake was attempting to point to a solution. The idea of the child seated in the middle of this piece came to Jake in a flash of insight. Even very young children have a great sense of how family life ought to be. They often possess great wisdom that knows that conflict is not how life should be. He is not drawn into the turmoil going on around him; rather he is connected to a higher state of spirituality, which is reinforced by the peaceful being above him. (2001)



Family on the Edge (closeup)

Medium: Terra Cotta on a background of plaster
Dimensions: 20 H x 8 W x 34 L (inches)

This all too common family breakdown scene certainly depicts suffering.(2001)





Woman in Grief

Medium: Modelling Clay

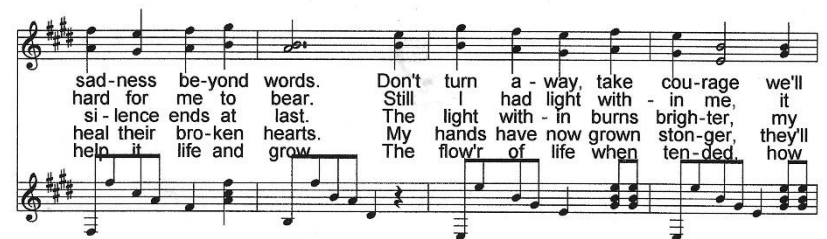
Dimensions: 3 H x 3 W x 6 L (inches)

Part of the Memorial to Victims of Violence, a terra cotta version of this design is currently in progress, which is three times as large as this model. (1995)

GIVE US A HAND

Jake Goertzen

Dedicated to Dr. Michael Irving

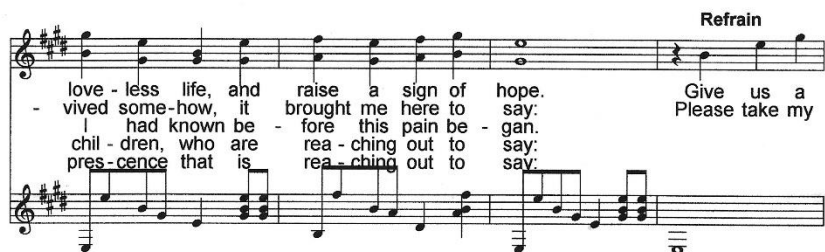


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find a way to mend the bro - ken child, the
gave me strength to live. With cou - rage I sur -
ach - ing heart is healed; a joy re - turns which
work to end the pain for o - ther lit - tle
beau - ti - ful it grows; a peace - ful, lo - ving

Refrain



love - less life, and raise a sign of hope. Give us a
- vived some-how, it brought me here to say: Please take my
had known be - fore this pain be - gan.
chil - dren, who are rea - ching out to say:
pres - ence that is rea - ching out to say:



hand, we're reach-ing out. Please take my hand, and stand by me.
hand, I'll walk with you. Though all seams dark with - in your heart.



We'll build a sign for all the world: a heal - ing hand for
You'll find the light with - in your soul. Your woun-ded heart can

*

Coda



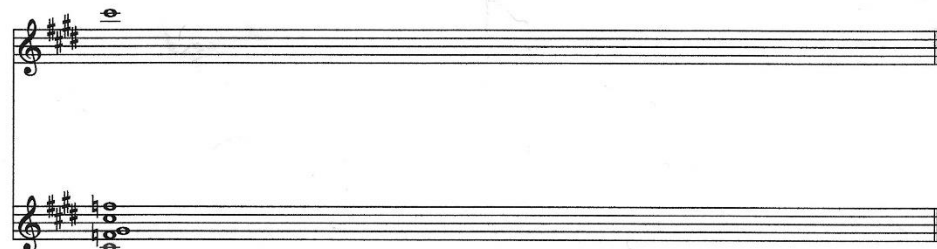
woun-ded hearts. We will build a mon - nu -
sing a - gain. We will sing a song of



- ment, a sur - vi - vor's mo - nu - ment, we will
love! We will sing a song of hope! We will



build a sign song of hope.
sing a song of joy!



We'll build a sign for all the world: a heal - ing hand for
You'll find the light with - in your soul. Your woun-ded heart can



Memorial to Victims of Violence

Medium: Modeling Clay

Dimensions: Height 2 ft.

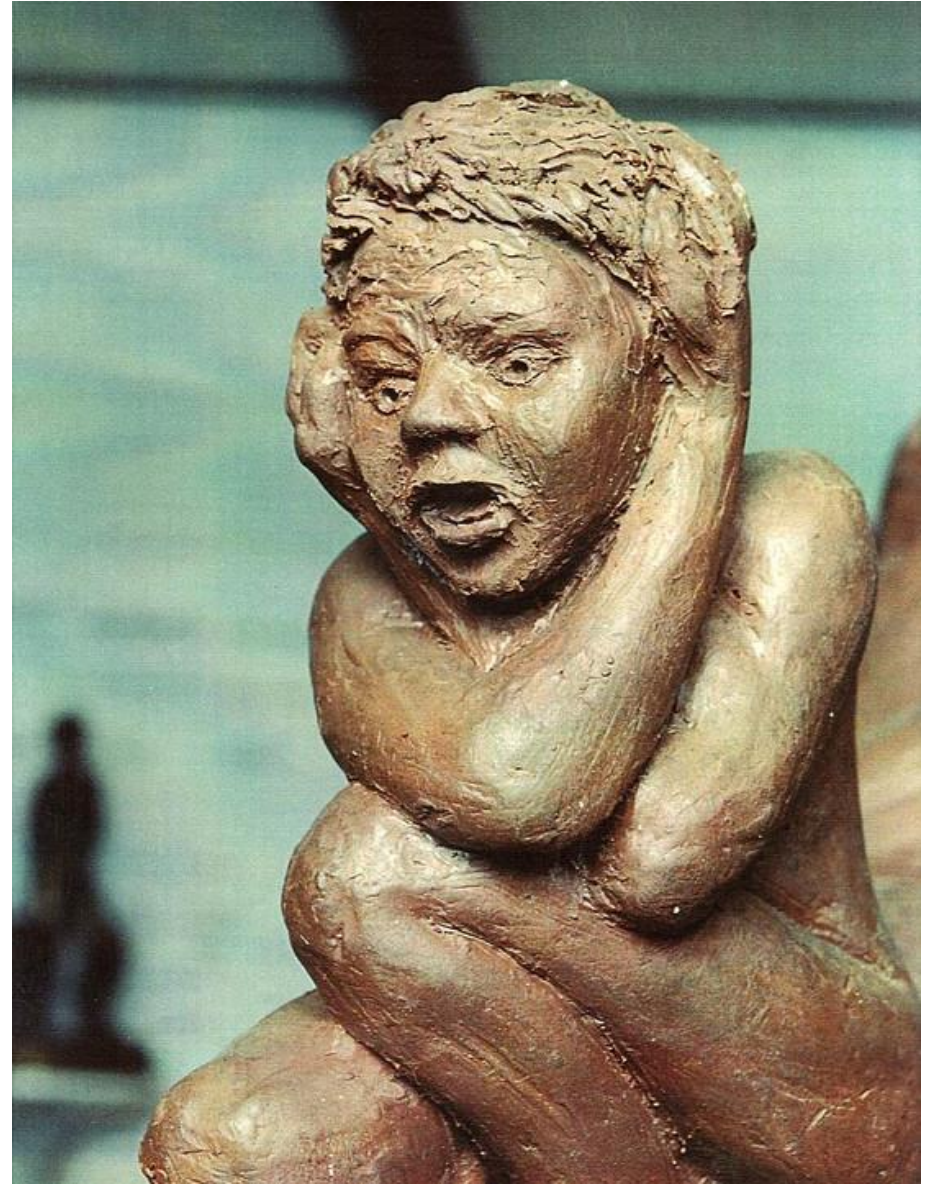
A committee was struck in Winnipeg in 1994 that called for designs for a memorial to homophobic violence. Jake elected to create a sculptural submission, which was welcomed. The committee subsequently dissolved and nothing was done in spite of 11 designs having been submitted. In due course this design will be used to create a much larger piece, and then cast in manmade stone or bronze. (1995)

Man in Horror⁷⁴

Medium: Modelling Clay

Dimensions: 6 H x 4 W x 5 L (inches)

This figure is part of the "Memorial to Victims to Violence." Not visible in these photographs is an outline of a human body on the back side of the sculpture in the manner a homicide is often marked by police officers. A terra cotta version of this design is presently in progress. (1994)



⁷⁴ This sculpture was inspired by a drawing by William Blake, "URIZEN, plate 12," William Blake, *The Complete Illuminated Books* (William Blake Trust and Tate Gallery, 2000), 208, 426.

Memorial to the Death of an Infant

Medium: Terra Cotta

Dimensions: 28 H x 1 W x 11 L (inches)

A bereaved couple in Winkler, Manitoba, made a donation to The Pembina Valley Pregnancy Crisis Center, an organization which helps and counsels pregnant teenage girls through the pregnancy and early stages of motherhood. The Crisis Centre commissioned a plaque to commemorate the loss of the couple's child, who died from a heart defect shortly after birth.



Image of a turtle

Memorial to Amanda Clearwater and her children in Carmen, Manitoba who died as a result of domestic violence on February 2, 2024.



Father and Son

Fathers joyfully interacting with their children is delightful to watch.

Man in Grief (left side)

Medium: Terra Cotta

Dimensions: 22 H x 12 W x 20 W (inches)

The model for this piece experienced the trauma of losing his father during the time of posing for this piece. Jake had lost his own father some months before this, and mourned his own loss as Jake created this piece.'



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V. To Love a Child

Infant Joy

Medium: Terra Cotta on a Background of Plaster

Dimensions: 60 H x 28 W x 30 L (inches)

This is Jake's favorite and according to him, his best sculpture. It is the central piece of the exhibit called to "Love a Child." Jake intended at first to show only a baby's joyous face on the mother's breast, with a look that expressed an infant's private view of paradise, and then surround this view with an oval. Jake added the mother's hands, then her head, and finally the whole supporting matrix



Infant Joy Lullaby

Lyrics: William Blake Music: Jake Goertzen

I have no name. I am but two days
 old. What shall I call thee? I hap - py
 am, joy is my name. Sweet joy be -
 - fall Thee. Sweet joy be - fall
 Thee. Pret - ty joy sweet joy but two days

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old. Sweet joy I call Thee. Thou dost
 smile I sing the while. Sweet joy be -
 - fall Thee. Sweet joy be - fall
 Thee.



Ultimately, this process ended up taking 9 months ... But curiously enough, it opened up a wellspring of joy within Jake which he tried to reflect in the baby's radiant expression of contentment.

The baby lives within an aura of radiant joy. Jake contends that this is the same state of union that mystics of all spiritual paths seek, the high State of Union with all life – sometimes called cosmic consciousness or Christ consciousness (1992).





Mother With Newborn

Medium: Terra Cotta on Hydrocol Base
(Plaster)

Dimensions: 7 H x 15 W x 20 L (inches)

A companion piece to Modern Madonna, this piece shows a deep bond between the mother and the child. Various compositional details reinforce the warmth of the bond between them. (1992)

Family Lullaby

Jake Goertzen

$\text{♩} = 102$

$\text{♩} = 102$

In the be - gin - ning Mo - ther
From the be - gin - ning fa - ther
Mo - thers and fa - thers with your

Na - ture nur - sing her lit - tle child. Heart to heart,
proud - ly cares for this love - ly pair. An - chor so -
lit - tle ones look in - to your hearts; joys of child -

and ten - der ca - res - ses love lul - la - bies.
- lid, he will pro - tect them let come what may.
- hood, trea - sure them al - ways, all of your life.

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Face to face in a warm em - brace.
Strong but gen - n - tle is his love.
Bright and beau - ti - ful in - no - cence.

Light in her eyes, and love in her heart, mark each day with
Light in his eyes, and love in his heart, mark each day with
Light in their eyes, and love in their hearts, mark each day with

joy. Bon - ded for - ev - er joy - ous - ly.
joy. Bon - ded for - ev - er joy - ous - ly.
joy. Peace - ful fa - mi - ly har - mo - ny.



Nursing Mother

Medium: Terra Cotta

Dimensions: 10 H x 8 W x 9 L (inches)

Inspired in 1993 in meeting Catherine Young, who published a magazine for young mothers called "*The Compleat Mother*", Jake sculpted this piece using the drawing on one of the covers of her magazine. It was his way of underlining the importance of breastfeeding our children. This piece is part of a body of work entitled, "To Love a Child," which depicts children and parents in relationships. (1994)

