

## **On Turning 50 – by Cecilia Frazee Johnson**

**It isn't just a sum, category, or even a moment. Though my birth date hasn't carried much relevance since my teen years, 50 seems magical somehow. The door was invisible and the minute I stepped through I was on my way to another age. But if I glance back, like a camera flashing, I can see clear pictures of my youth. Not all were victorious but all were fortuitous. The most vivid snapshots are the ones where I made choices.**

**Our grade school had added on and in the process a class was moved to our school from a different town. When our teacher told us that two more students were needed from our class to fill the other I raised my hand. I didn't dislike anyone in my old class, in fact my best friend JoAnn was to remain. Even though it was only a different classroom, in sixth grade, it was if someone had offered me a new realm where I'd been given the power to choose. Click...**

**Junior high in a new town our family had moved to. I remember excitedly running through ice covered puddles on my way to the cinder track. It was the first sport I had chosen to join. Click...**

**Another new town, this time a new state, I am walking into Mr. Bong's class and 'Rosie' is blasting over the speakers. Click... I am washing the finger prints and hand smudges off the front door windows of the high school. The sounds of bouncing basketballs and squeaking sneakers on the polished wood floors obscure the shouts and chatter up and down the hallways. Click...**

**I walked home on a cold wet day from class in LaCrosse, with a housemate, we freaked because the front door's glass was bloody and broken out. Click...**

**One of my favorites was of Mickey picking me up at my parents in his Camaro, to go to a family birthday party. When he handed me a brown diamond shaped box and quietly asked me those four wonderful words I thought my heart was going to burst. We didn't leave until I dragged him back into the house and told my parents.**

**There are so many moments, jobs, places, and ideas I've lived in these last fifty years but it has been the right and not so right choices that have spurred my growth. The lessons have been momentous and I have learned to really love and appreciate everything I have right now and every moment...even the things that are hard to swallow.**

**My number one lesson has been non-judgmental love and compassion for my family and friends and a deeper appreciation for their strengths. I strive daily not to wallow in other people's sadness and anger without becoming indifferent so that I can hold onto the magic of each moment. Regret is not an option and 50 is only the beginning.**