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## A Chapbook for Charity

### A proposal from John A. Kriebel

Dear Friends,

I'm a lifelong poet and have hundreds of poems of all types, from silly light verse for families with children to gut-level poems about human suffering.

### NEWS FLASH (a triolet)

The woman pushed the crumpled news aside  
to search for scraps of food beneath the trash.  
The hungry stomach can't afford false pride.  
The woman pushed the crumpled news aside.  
"Pigs" she mumbled. "Diamonds" the ads replied.  
"A whole year's groceries for a stone to flash."  
The woman pushed the crumpled news aside  
to search for scraps of food beneath the trash.

A few years ago I wondered what I could do for the homeless and hungry in this most prosperous period in the history of this most prosperous country in the world. Being a poet, the first thing that came to mind was to write some poems, since that is how I best express myself.

But what could I do with the poems to really help the needy? Well, I did what I could. A friend told me that the *San Francisco Poetry Journal* liked that kind of poem so I sent them three or four, which they published. I sent one, "Options/No Options," to *Friends Journal*, and they published it in December 1998. To my surprise *The Friend* in London called and asked to reprint it, which they did.

Since resettling in New Jersey I've expressed my concern through some volunteer work in the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry and at a soup kitchen and shelter of the Interfaith Hospitality Network. This is an interdenominational group that houses and feeds the homeless. Each participating congregation gives a week at a time. Two Friends meetings are involved.

A neighbor told me of working in a soup kitchen and seeing a woman come in after spending a night in the rain on the railroad tracks. This inspired me to write "Sonnet for a Hungry Lady"....

An idea has been simmering on the back burner of my mind for several years. I would like help in putting together a chapbook. I have no money or organizational skills for publishing or distributing this. It is my idea, partly to avoid complications, to make a chapbook of perhaps 12-16 pages available at meetings, churches, and similar places for a "suggested contribution" of \$3 to \$5. *I do not want any money from this.* I would suggest that those who take a copy would either put some money in a box or agree to send a check to their favorite *local* charity. While Friends have many worthwhile causes, I would rather the money not go to broadly based world organizations, but be used to support our neighbors in need. I would like to see the idea spread, so I might provide a stick-in page for charities in my area but would leave it open for other

# Types & Shadows

JOURNAL OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF QUAKERS IN THE ARTS

Issue #17, Spring 2000

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localities to suggest their own. Hopefully, these would be *local* organizations helping to feed, clothe and house *our neighbors close at hand* who have lost "The American Dream" if they ever saw it as a possibility.

Please let me know if you feel this is a project worth furthering.

John Kriebel  
Mount Holly (NJ) MM

*As we go to press, we have just received a copy of No Place Like Home: a Chapbook for Charity, which is intended to benefit the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Burlington County, New Jersey. A small grant from FQA helped with printing costs.*

*UPDATE: John Kriebel printed several more chapbooks to benefit various charities before his death in August 2001 at the age of 73.[check]*

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*Types & Shadows is published quarterly by the Fellowship of Quakers in the Arts. Subscriptions are available through membership in the FQA.*

*This page added January 2002*