

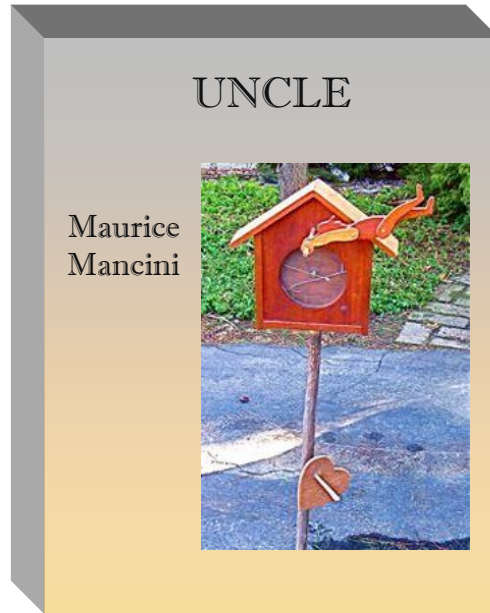
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Cover photo by Mo Mancini

**Origami Poem Project**

UNCLE  
Maurice Mancini © 2011



thanks for the ice skating lesson  
and the relief carving  
crafted with your hands  
that I absconded  
I am sure the story doesn't end here

thank you for bringing us together  
sharing some food and drink, stories about you,  
about us  
the distances  
between family and the closeness of strangers  
I miss you already  
but find solace in knowing you are  
in good hands again  
hoping you find peace in the home of your father  
comfort by your mother's side  
joy in the welcoming arms of your brother

but what I remember most of uncle Arthur  
who at various times lived embedded  
in my family (as this memory  
lives embedded in my mind)  
was a Saturday morning when the kitchen floor  
became an ice rink  
he skated with grace  
gliding in his bath robe and socks

if it was a one time deal it lasted long enough  
to etch a vision etched in my memory, a familiar  
landscape

we waked him  
he did not stir

## UNCLE

I have been working on a story about my uncle  
but it seems to be an unstable platform and  
keeps shifting in its sleep as if alive  
evolving, even as he is dead  
my uncle died, just shy of eighty-nine years  
a cantankerous old man

I miss you already  
but find solace in knowing you are in  
good hands again  
hoping you find peace  
in the home of your father  
comfort by your mother's side  
and joy in the welcoming arms of your brother

I wrote infrequent letters describing some  
project or event in my life  
sometimes I sent pictures, maybe a poem  
never a reply or a mention,  
I wrote when I wanted  
rarer were my visits

he was very engaged and knowledgeable  
about his collection of antiques,  
near antiquities, and object d'art  
and wheeled adroitly through the maze  
they created that made him another texture  
in the collage  
when I played my guitar for him  
he wanted to know that if I played this composition  
tomorrow would it be the same  
and the day after  
ever changing with no beginning, no end  
start stop?  
one day he waved good bye to his dear friend  
and companion of fifteen years  
which he never did to anyone  
as if he knew that this time was "good bye"  
and died without drama