



The illustrations for Janet Henry's latest volume of verse were a collaborative effort between the poet and her son, Scott.

Henry's 'Beat' starts where 'Bedlam' ended

By MARTHA TOWNS

It has been a busy fall for the Valley's poet laureate Janet Henry who is on the go with the copies of her third book of poems, "The Beat Goes On."

Henry fans will know that "Beat" takes up where "And So to Bedlam" and "This Side of Sanity" left off, with the birth of the last two of the six Henry children. The four oldest, Scott, Rick, Chris and Casey are grown and gone. Still at home is Robin. Sister Heidi is a sophomore at Hiram College.

For Janet Henry this third book has been a personal delight in more ways than one. Handsome son Scott, 28, a salesman for Aetna Plastics, has done the illustrations for his mother's poems and the collaboration is a great success.

Mrs. Henry has always had a way of turning the simplest things and, conversely, the most difficult, into a bit of verse that seems to capture the essence of the moment.

For some years she was nationally syndicated and appeared in the Ladies' Home Journal and in the Cleveland Press. She has also become nationally known as a lecturer, speaking to diverse groups and organizations. With a flip chart of illustrations she has chronicled family life and gathered laughter and fans from coast to coast.

She might have continued on indefinitely with her light-hearted views of life, but then five years ago something happened that gave her life a whole new direction. Janet Henry had a radical mastectomy and there was extensive lymph node involvement. The prognosis was not good.

That she is today one of the star speakers for the American Cancer Society is no surprise to the people who know this dynamic and charming lady. She feels quite sure that she is

alive today because she was willing to be a guinea pig for a whole new series of chemotherapy and immunotherapy treatments — which University Hospitals went into just about the time she needed them most. The treatments were difficult and they lasted two years, but they were a success.

Her involvement as a spokesman for cancer research gave her life a whole new sense of purpose, but there was something missing and it was a wise doctor who told her she ought to get back to her first love, her poetry. She took him at his word and the result was "The Beat Goes On."

Janet publishes her own books which gives her a delicious sense of independence. "It's a wonderful way to do it," she said. "This way I'm not tied to anyone."

She has been making the rounds of the Cleveland media and a recent appearance with Dorothy Fuldheim practically "made the phone ring off the wall." You can catch her on "The Morning Exchange," Dec. 7.

Tuesday night she'll make a rare local appearance when she brings her verse and her books to the November dinner meeting of the Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce for which tickets are still available from the Chamber office.

She had planned to pack up a sack full of books and head for her first-ever trip to California and a reunion with former roommates in January, but that trip has been postponed. Janet Henry has been asked to speak at the national meeting of the American Cancer Society in Houston and it's an engagement she "wouldn't not accept for anything in the world."

California, you're just going to have to wait a while to meet Janet Henry.