

## My Companion

*by Carole Gauntlett*

My "inner child" keeps asking, "What the hell happened?"

She wants to run and skip and skate and bike and toboggan with me just the way we once did. She hasn't slowed, nor aged, nor put on weight. She's still the adventuresome child she's always been. I'm the one who must accept the challenges of aging.

She's still though an excellent companion. She's why I treasure my time alone and can take on creative projects. She's also why I seem to talk to myself.

She reminds me how to enjoy the companionship of children. We spent five hours at the Nature and Science Museum on Saturday with six and nine-year-old boys and seemed never to tire until they were returned to their parents and we could take a nap with smiles on our faces.

She's why my life has never been empty. Volunteering seems to be her mission for me since I retired last year. Sometimes I hear her say, "I will!" or she raises my hand before I have a chance to consider. But she's almost always right about it.

I sometimes feel that she's a bit disappointed by my lack of ecstatic enthusiasm but she never ceases to encourage me to keep stretching and enjoying our life together.