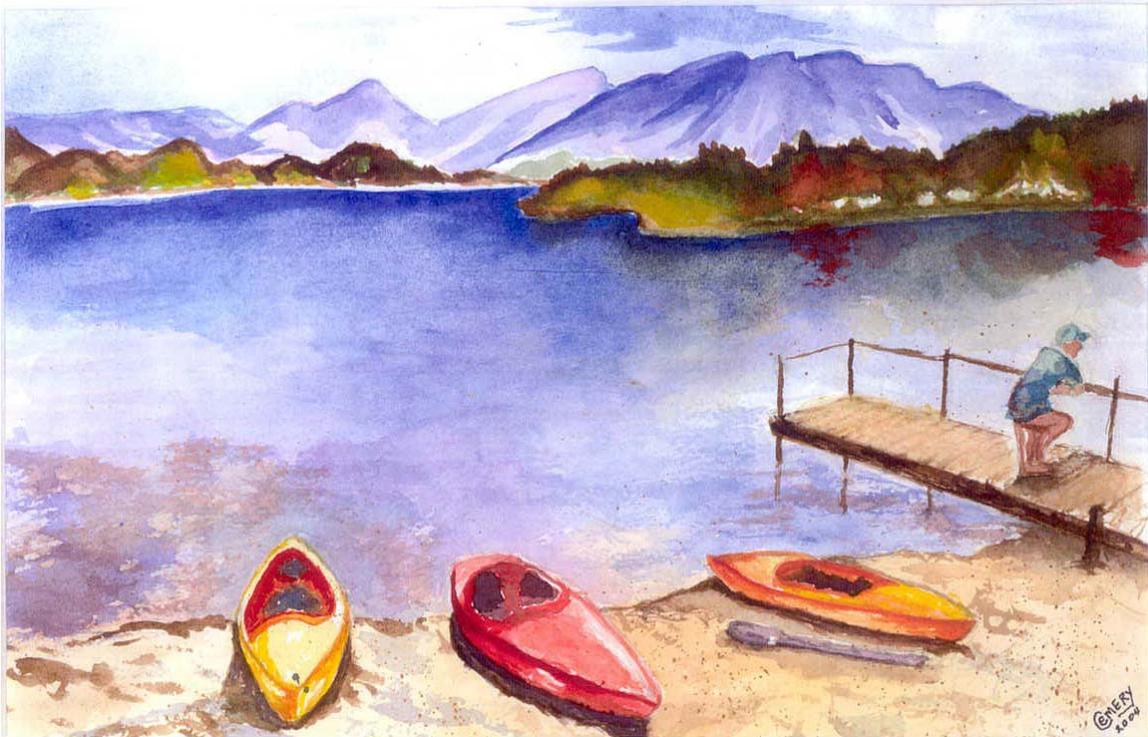


Summertime



Fact & Fancy

This book was created as part of *Lifescapes*, a cooperative project of the Washoe County Library System, the University of Nevada, Reno English Department, and the Nevada Humanities Committee.

Editorial team: Lois Smyres, Sherl Landers-Thorman, Joe Parks, Julie Machado. The entire class helped design the cover. The cover includes a watercolor painted by Carolyn Emery from a photo included in this book.

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Lifescapes: Senior Writing Project is a program designed for seniors to write their life stories. Well over 50 books have been published since it was started four years ago. The books are available to view on the website: www.lifescapesmemoirs.net. The members meet from September through April, reading and discussing literature, and writing and sharing their own stories, until publication in May of each year.

After this year of *Lifescapes* the members agreed to hold a Summer Camp. This anthology is a compilation of summer stories including essays, poetry, and fiction.

The poem on the following page by "*Lifescaper*" Andrew Ivanov describes this session well. We hope you enjoy the book!

Ode To The Summer Camp Group Of 2004

Andrew Ivanov

We are an exceptional group,
A hard working writing troop.
We are evolving from one stage into another,
It's our personal past with others we gather,
And write, write, write!
It's our spiritual evolutionary continuum,
An Inter-awareness of others that transcends us ad infinitum.
We are doing it not only through our lives,
But the lives of others of the past ties.
So, they can live in and gain immortality.
All of us intensifying our spiritual evolution.
It's our itch to write which denotes this contribution.
It's evident in our writing: human and not human,
They all take higher forms in evolutionary stage,
Animals that think and speak with feelings not in cage;
Many inanimate objects become alive, converse and ponder.
We are reincarnating all those who are not here to saunter,
But they are alive in our poems and stories,
We acknowledge their esprit to higher awareness with no worries.
And we derive inner satisfaction, happiness in this task.
Most of us are retired from other life but we don't bask
In a rocking chair on porch give up and die,
We are evolving in our writing to a higher awareness on a sly.
Isn't realistic that our mental awareness transforming us,
We feel liberated and aware that we can write and have a buzz,
And have a power to recreate, reincarnate anybody or anything without fuss.
Is it possible for us to predict future in our next level of sass?
Since all of us have reconstructed the past by embellishing in our writings
en masse.
Is this idea of such power is scaring the pants off us?
Are the vistas of infinite capabilities to question, create and incarnate
All those we have known, those we didn't and those who never were,
Now living, breathing is it so terrifying that they are here?
Don't we feel a new kind of strength surge through the lives of our creation
Now, can we think beyond that and foretell our destination?

Lifescapes

Summertime

Betty Waltenspiel

The first summer I remember was in Salt Lake City. We lived in the Pierpont Apartments. There was a big front veranda which was on the second story and we could sit out there and watch the world go by. There was also a wonderful vacant lot across the street and we could play Kick the Can and Hide and Go Seek. We would walk around on our stilts which we had made by squashing tin cans with our shoes and go walking around with the cans on our feet. Summer seemed like such a long time then. The time between lunch and dinner was hours, not minutes like it seems now.

Occasionally we would go with my Uncle Carl and his family up into the mountains around the city. That made a really exciting time as we could climb on railroad trestles and do other wonderful things that were definitely unhealthy.

The first summer I remember in Reno was spent working at Chism's Ice Cream Company packing popsicles. There was a window right in front of the packing table with a great view of the world outside on West Street, I believe. The pay was good and I could eat all the ice cream I could hold. There I met my first adult crush, a really nice young man named Jim who took time to come to my house and repair my bicycle "Suzy", the boy's bike without a seat. My friends, Lou and Mo, and I spent lots of great times riding around the city. Jim's good deeds went beyond helping bike riders. On one occasion he jumped into the Truckee River and saved a boy from drowning. My Mother and I used to walk along the river out to Idlewild Park to watch Jim play baseball.

We didn't need a motor home or even a tent to enjoy camping. Patty our dear friend's mother was lucky enough to know the Caughlins who owned a large chunk of southwest Reno. Their house still stands at the corner of Mayberry and McCarran. At the time I was a teenager the house was surrounded by meadows with one dirt road leading up into the trees. Patty got permission for us to go up there and camp. Lou and I would pack our bikes with our bed rolls; for the uninformed these were the precursors of sleeping bags. We also had a large tin can with an opening on one side so that we could make a tiny fire to cook our hot dogs or bacon and eggs. Yes, it was a beautiful setting. Alum Creek went slowly by and we even made up a song. We called one of the nearest hills Saddle Mountain.

"Saddle Mt. enshrined by lofty pines.
Saddle Mt. where the sleepy moon reclines.
Lazy Alum Creek goes slipping by.
Flirting stars and planets polka dot the sky.
Silly thing tree and lazing in the sun made Saddle Mt. Fun."

Patty played the ukulele. I still can almost see the faces of my dear friends in the firelight. My husband George and Bill, who married Lou later on, sometimes came up for a picnic. As well as Lou's brothers Mike and Terry and our dear friend Milo. Has that been sixty years ago? Yes, I guess it has.



Pageantry In The Mind's Eye On A Windy Day

L. Chestnut Sorgen

Trees suddenly donning gowns of rustling satin
Signal God's sweeping on His earthly home.
Arching and swaying, they partner with the wind
To dance and sing mellifluous melancholy

Across my mind....

Whirling eddies wish at corners, stirring webs,
Jogging dusty memories from dying leaves within me.
The panoramic camera swings wide, still searching,
Strobelighting random, incomplete selections

Across my mind....

Chosen moments harbored in the mind's inner sanctum,
Insignificant trivia, one-time traveled places
Reappear to tease as if they happened yesterday.
Gliding in, out – like skiers – crouching, darting

Across my mind....

Children's scarves whipping in the snow, a beach,
A walk taken holding hands on Lovers' Row,
The sun's caress of an autumn day long ago,
Moving in and out, this vague chiffon, softly playing

Across my mind....

The catalytic wind hushes; startled vignettes fade;
Time steps in releasing bondages to the past.
Until another rendezvous, another windy day,
Lifes goes on culturing living pearls to string

Across my mind....

Lois Chestnut Sorgen: I am in love with words. I write to put their beautiful forms on paper and delight when they conjure new relationships with a reader. Writing goes with me wherever I may travel.

Stick Horses

Vickie M. Vera

One of my fondest childhood memories is when, as a child, we traveled to my uncle's ranch in Idaho Falls. My grandmother and two aunts lived there as well. My uncle had three ranches in the area, but one I especially liked was the homestead where my one aunt lived. It was at this location where my uncle kept his dairy cattle, and sometimes I'd accompany him on his rounds. I also loved this location because there was a small creek through the property for irrigation with huge trees lining each side. On one visit I remember my father trying to restore a baby bird, a magpie, I think, to its nest after it fell from the tree. I've always loved horses since I can remember and often fantasized about being a horse and how I'd race the wind and be wild and free. I loved playing stick horses, too!

Along the creek I'd pick young saplings or branches and proceed to peel the bark to the white underneath. The stick horses would then become my white or Palomino horses. To my way of thinking, at about age 9 or 10, the longer the stick horse the finer it was. After all, I had to have long sticks to allow for a flowing mane and tail. I'd use discarded bailing twine from my uncle's hay for their bridles, and run around the yard, my legs the legs of the prancing horses. I had a stable of a least four of these magnificent high-spirited beasts.

That was one of the happiest times of my life, not only because I was imagining horses, but because I was with the people I loved most, my parents, my grandmother, aunts, and uncle. I loved our large family suppers where I remember midday we always had a roast of some sort, potatoes, a salad, a vegetable, usually corn, some bread, and the best pickle relish I have ever tasted in my entire life. I think my Aunt Vivian, made it. Never in the last 45 years have I been able to duplicate it and heaven knows I've tried.

Sometimes it makes me sad that all we're left with in the end is memories and photographs, and an empty space in our hearts. It just doesn't seem right that things like a rock, a building, a tractor or any other inanimate object can be around for hundreds even thousands of years, but those we love, memories we cherish, disappear all too quickly leaving a void in our hearts. I wish our lives were all on videos that we could stop and rewind and play over and over and over and over again reliving all the wonderful times, those times when we were younger and thought nothing bad could or would ever happen to us, that we'd always be playing stick horses.



Vickie Vera
Vivian's Ranch, Idaho Falls
S. Lem. Rd. - T. H. W. D. I.

Vickie Vera, 55, grew up as a “military brat.” No wonder she feels akin to a gypsy having moved every three years throughout her childhood. She has loved to paint and draw since age 10, but only recently started writing. She lives in Sun Valley, NV with her five children, numerous cats, three dogs, two goats, four chickens, one fish, and one pigeon.

Summer of Yesteryears

Lourdes Agcaoili-Harshbarger

When I was in high school, it became a tradition for my friend Carmen Chunuan and me to spend our summer vacation in my dad's hometown, Ilocos Norte, in Northern Philippines. As soon as the summer classes were over, we got our summer clothes together and with whatever cash our parents gave us off we went to the transportation depot to reserve seats for Laoag, the capital of Ilocos Norte. That was the end of the line. We would be either met by relatives or friends for the rest of the trip to Sarrat.

One summer fest, we encountered a delay and arrived in Laoag late in the night. Since there were no telephone communications, let alone cell phones, we were stuck. We did not have extra money for a hotel room but we had enough money to pay for special transportation. At that particular time, only a caratella (a horse drawn two-wheel cart) was available. We had no choice but to hire it.

The ride was a bumpy and dusty two-hour drive, which would have been at least 45 minutes by car or motorized vehicle. It was a dangerous drive, too, because it was pitch dark and who knows whom we would encounter on those isolated roads. The only sound you could hear was the plop-plop-plop of the horse's hoofs on the pavement. And the only light lighting our way was the dim flame emanating from the kerosene lamp on the side of the caratella. Looking at the skinny and emaciated horse gave me an even more pessimistic feeling; would we ever make it to our destination?

Carmen and I were fighting sleep lest the driver also dozed off and we would all fall down a ditch. We were clutching on to and praying our rosaries. Thank God, we finally came to more familiar grounds. Before long we were at the front steps of the home of my grandmother, Lola Bashiang. The house was pitch dark. They must have thought we were not arriving that day. We paid the caratella driver, gave him a tip and thanked him for his safe driving and bade him goodbye.

I climbed up the stairs and knocked on the door. My cousin Monica came to open the door. Before too long the whole household was awake. After we exchanged hugs and kisses, my Aunt Masing started heating up some food knowing that we must have been starving from the long eight-hour trip. I didn't know whether I was more sleepy than hungry, but the smell of adobo was permeating; I could not resist it. We ate like hungry stevedores and by the time we went to bed it was past midnight.

The following morning, my cousin Esperanza awakened us. I communicated with her on a regular basis, and she knew of our arrival. She said she had informed some of our relatives and her friends about our coming and a dance party was

set up to welcome us that evening. We were honored and thrilled that there was some happening arranged to entertain us immediately. They did not waste any time.

At the party, we met some cute and interesting guys. Among them were, Joseph and Adolph Coble, two good-looking brothers. Carmen had a crush on Joseph and I had my eye on Adolph the younger of the two. We were the belles of the dance party, to say the least, and the envy of the local girls. We felt very flattered.

After the party, no sooner had we gone to sleep, when I was awoken by the strumming of guitar and beautiful sounding voices. I nudged Carmen, who is a deep sleeper and whispered to her, "Do you hear what I hear?" Carmen and I have never been serenaded in our lives so we did not know what to make of it. We softly stood up from bed and peeked from the slightly opened window from where we could hear the sound coming. Since it was a moonless night, we could hardly recognize anybody. However, we just stood there and listened to their romantic ballads. I suppose we were to look out of the window to show ourselves and acknowledge their presence, but because we were city girls and had never experienced such a thing, we just kept quiet until they slowly left. We didn't know what to do.

My grandmother, aunt and cousins slept through the serenade. So when we told them the following morning, my aunt said, "You should have looked out of the window and told them you appreciated their serenade." "Oh!" I said, "We didn't know what the custom was. We've never been serenaded before and nobody warned us." However, we looked forward to another serenade since we were staying for a week. Sure enough, we were serenaded again. Unfortunately, we did not know, nor did the troubadours know that we were invited to sleep at my Cousin Esperanza's house across the street for the next couple of nights.

When the serenaders started strumming their guitars, we could hear them from Esperanza's house. We started giggling as we peeked from the window because they were not aware of our whereabouts and that they were serenading my grandmother and my widowed aunt instead. They sang many romantic songs and we could also see one or two tracing our names on the air with their lighted cigarettes. "How romantic!" Carmen and I commented. However, we never revealed our whereabouts that night lest they get embarrassed. By the time we were ready to leave we were serenaded some more and we knew what to do then, which made them happy.

Lourdes is a fledgling writer, a community advocate, and a transplant from Northern California, who is now residing in Reno, Nevada.



From left to right: Tita, Carmen, Lu and Lourdes. Summer circa 1949.



Vicki Ann Searce

Vicki Ann

Ruth Searce

T'was weeks before my due date,
While at Camp July fourth celebration
In the camp for Summer restoration.

When off in the North sky,
In glowing combination
Of forms from the Big Dipper Constellation
Spelled out names
For our deliberation.

“She’d” be a gift
No parental fabrication,
To the world,
Her endless perfection.

Or “he” on further investigation
A gift to the world,
His endless perfection.

But alas! T'was a “she.”
From our information,
Five pounds, Blond hair
Blue eyes, our JOY!
The finest creation!

All of our love, Vicki Ann, Our Angel

*As a Military wife our family's favorite summer camp was off the Chena River
near Fairbanks, Alaska. ~ Ruth Searce.*

Julie's Song

Julie Machado

I dive into the clear blue ocean.
Colorful fish swim around me, curious and playful.
A moray eel pokes his spotted head from its rocky crevice, wary,
while a green sea turtle waits for me on the sandy bottom.

I see the wave come. It's just the right one.
I paddle like crazy so I can match its speed by the time it reaches me.
I feel the surge as the wave pushes up my board,
and I stand, crouched, for the ride in the hot air on the blue wave fringed with
white sea foam.

We hike through the mountain on a well-trodden path.
We see deer prints and the rabbit wishing it were better hidden from the soaring
eagle.
I know I can cross that trickle of a stream, but I fall in anyway.
It's just the way I am.
When we get to the pond we jump in and play under the waterfalls and wonder
what is on the bottom.

I am hidden in the garden jungle,
deep in the loamy heat of the hedge.
I clean out last year's mulch and replace it with new.
I prune and glue so the bugs won't get to the sweet juicy meat of the sticky
stems.
When I'm done I will enjoy all the pink rosebuds that magically appear in the
deep green sea of my rose hedge.

I pick up my bass and feel the familiar old wood under my fingertips.
I warm up on scales, etudes; something old, something new.
Then I close my eyes and play.
And as I stroke the strings, big beautiful woody tones come from the large old
body,
and songs come to my lips and out in a joyful melody.

I am in a quiet place, alone with my book and the cat and dog.
I travel to other places: fact or fancy.
Reading takes me away to places through other's eyes.
I wonder what it would be like to have so many lives that you could experience it
all yourself firsthand.

I am rolling in the grass, having food fights, water fights, silly string, cakes and pies, home-made ice cream, picnics on homemade quilts.
Summer camp, ski trips, Hawaii trips, vacations of all sorts, talk and play.
Dinner talk while watching TV, playing Yahtzee and charades: sometimes all at once!
All this, and more, is what being with my family and friends is like.

These are the things I love. This is my song of life.

Julie is one of the founders of Lifescapes. She tries to do all the writing the rest of the group does, but rarely keeps up. Summer is her favorite time of the year.

Kelly the Aquatic Water-Bug

Ellen Godwin

Kelly loved her adventures, diving and swimming in circles Summers in a hot town under the shade of Mt. Shasta appeared warm, hot and sometimes too hot.

Poolside parents waited and watched anxiously as their children learned to swim. Bobbing up and down in a bright blue suit in a bright blue pool makes the kids happy and the parents nervous. Moms peer through the fence during the hot morning swim lessons. Tan lifeguards distribute water rules to the kids, "Learning to swim is fun, but follow the pool rules." Nudging their charges out to the tiled railings became the standard for learning to swim. Before you entered the main cool, blue pool, each 'tadpole' learned about water and how to become skillful at diving and floating.

In our home town, "tadpoles" scurried about in the pool kicking up water and darting in and out of the cool blue water. Warm summer days turned into long, hot summer days. Swimming allowed us to keep cool on the hot days.

We started out as "Moms" in a YMCA program at the local high school pool. Moms and Dads gathered after a long, hot day at work, to cool off in the high school pool. "Take that baby and walk about the pool holding the child above the water." The staff directed the safe procedures for babies learning to swim. The Mom holds the six-month old baby. With squeals of glee, and water churning everywhere, Kelly seemed happiest in water, any kind of water; waves of blue water, and more wiggling and kicking. The YMCA theory challenges all ideas for kids to feel safe in water; kids who can float face down, and hold their breath, and wiggle toward you underwater, then popping up smiling and churning more water, always wiggling, perhaps to stay afloat. Most of the kids – Jennifer, Carolyn and Jessica loved the water. They wiggled like new fish in a glass bowl; gasping for a few gulps of air as they flipped around way over their heads in water. Shiny, slippery heads bobbing up and down every which-way. Swimming is like driving a car, a used car, you like the feeling and freedom of what you are doing. It helps you get around in a new environment. But, best of all, you are getting cool, and that's what it was all about when Kelly learned to swim on a hot summer day.

Today when she is reminded of the swimming episodes, she remembers the car rides most of all. Kelly rode in the car before the age of one month. She dreamed her dreams from the porta-crib in the green Buick station-wagon as we traveled from home to the store, or the school to pick up her siblings, and to the pool. Safely tucked into her infant bed, we rode along and across the Sacramento River. Years later, she said, "I grew up in a car, didn't I, Mom?"

I replied, “And you learned to swim like a ‘tadpole’ at six months of age.” Today she literally swims circles around us all.

Ellen lives in Reno, Nevada. She graduated in 1992 from UNR and earned a Master of Ed Tech in 1996. Ellen worked at the University of Alaska in Career Education.

Summer Day

Andrew Ivanov

Part I

My summer morn with an early rise is elemental,
A quick back yard "aussie" breakfast is fundamental,
A toast with fresh home-grown tomatoes on deck.
A flock of birds queuing for the feeder for their morning peck;
The fish in the pond flopping and popping the pellets afloat;
With the magnificent view of the Sierras with a misty scrubby moat.
The warm rays of the ascending sun is clearing the somberness of morn,
And sparkling like diamonds in reflections on the dewy lawn.
A glorious summer day beginning with the smiling sun,
Predicting a relaxing and productive summery day of fun.

We just go on forever with summer days,
With these clear blue skies, blue waters and the smiling sun.
For we are alone the two of us in the garden,
With the birds, fish, bees on the flowers with a fly or two.
In the shade of our apricot tree we laugh, share our thoughts and stew,
Over the lines of said prose rhyme without a clue.
Prying Calliope to give one more line and we're through,
But the muse is silent not a peep, she waits anew,
For my heart to sing of some miracle from above,
To move me from the somber thoughts to a divine sign,
To sleep and dream in the bright sunny day awaiting line,
For the night to come to clear my mind.

The night time has its own world,
Full of life and hazards without end:
Those ghostly noises that you hear.
In which you're startled with a pricked attention;
Those fleeting streaks before your eyes are they an imagination?
There's life which moves much faster than in light.
It's not your drowsing, but your inner sharper sight,
Which allows you momentarily to be aware of other life.

The muses know of this night enigma but seldom utter,
They leave it up to you to clear your mind clutter,
Then a miraculous vision may appear in your imagination,
A subtle order from above for your believable recreation.
It may be tiring in this inner prediction,
It might lock you out of your creative diction,

But then this circle may expand some new vistas and ways,
In which your creative juices will run all summer nights and days.

Part II

Time is like a bird on a wing
Flying by as quickly as a wink.
But my heart and mind are unyieldingly fast
Awaitingly resolute in their wishful quest
The luck will come in its own sweet time
To those who know how to wait in line
It's hard to predict exactly when it's your turn
But listen to your heart and brain and you'll learn.

~~~

The August moon with its pale beams,  
Rollingly playing peek-a-boo in foggy shrouds,  
Then hides completely behind the clouds.  
The night brings some strange thoughts to mind,  
Let this night continue to bring some unfamiliar design,  
As if somewhere sometime moons ago my memories entwine.  
It was the gypsy woman who vaticinated what will be,  
My future, revealing to my mother and not to me.  
It was a moony night just like this with the witches brew  
It was strange to me then, but now I can hardly review  
What to happen has happened with no other way to ensue  
As it was foretold during the pale moon night of the Gypsy say.  
It was this pallid moonlight magic had a lot to do  
In forecasting my destiny of which I wasn't told or ever knew.  
Till I discovered in my mother's cookbook folded in askew,  
Your boy will be a man of letters in the faraway place,  
A vagabond life awaits him so enjoy his presence and face  
The pain to be apart but knowing that he is alive and loves you.  
As my sister-in-law was getting rid of papers and books,  
In a strange language which were in the attic's nook.  
My mother left them thirty years ago as she passed on in Sydney.  
Who thought that in the sunset of my life in the land of down under,  
I'll read this gypsy medium forecaster's note in recipes asunder,  
With a warning not to tell and take it to the grave,  
That I'll be in the poetic frenzied itch in diction stave,  
As the gypsy healer, predictor of the future, reconstructor of the past,  
Words, words, with the wording pleasure that'll last.

# Bonnie and the Roosevelt Elk

Ellen Godwin

Roosevelt Elk live on the coast of Oregon, and also in the suburban wilds of Alaska. Just a few months ago, these elk purchased a new home on the browse in Central Alaska. A migrating elk might be a quicker, cleaner, and less expensive transfer, just another meander a few miles from home. But thanks to Bonnie, some Roosevelt Elk dropped into Juneau last fall when late summer weather permitted, weather like spring and winter and fall.

The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) consented to transport a small herd of elk to Alaska via the Southeast Archipelago route, on-board in the usual car-deck arrangement. Not clearly a field of rich browse, but rather seven days of dry feed and confinement to quarters. Large wooden stalls or crates offered housing and protection from the rocking waves and waves of vertigo: a delicate dance for the safety in travel to Alaska.

Bonnie is a ticket reservation agent, and gives tourists a fair and full accounting as she books you a ticket to ride the ferry. She inserts information to all the tourists who want to finally “make the trip of a lifetime, a long awaited trip.” “Now I can die, I am here in Alaska.” A little known fact; we all own a bit of that feeling that Alaska offers the final look at “The Last Frontier.” Well, Roosevelt Elk are no different than other tourists, they just didn’t expect it to happen, the travel to Alaska is probably a surprise adventure.

Bonnie lives near the terminal, the Auke Bay Ferry Terminal. In fact, she has a small, fenced farm yard within minutes of Auke Bay. Bonnie not only sold space on the car-deck for the traveling Roosevelt Elk, she also sold space for a field trip of Elk in her farm yard. Yep, “Roosevelt Visit Juneau On A Layover.” Front page news in Juneau. Good public relations for the AMHS, and a secret from Bonnie’s neighbors. The animals definitely needed a change of pace. A walk to a nearby haven for a field trip and a break from the rolls of sea waves seemed necessary. The short stop in Juneau offered the locals a chance to see the elk. School children made educational discoveries, and Bonnie delighted in her guest’s visit in her farm yard.

The AMHS was happy to have the elk away on a field trip before the next shift of cargo departed. Roosevelt Elk moving on to a new location, a bit more remote than before along The Oregon Trail.

Bonnie might pick you up at the dock if you ever get up to Juneau, Alaska in the summertime.

# Waiting for the Sun

Carolyn Emery

Summer is in February in New Zealand. Usually hot and dry with clear blue skies. That's why we left winter behind in Reno and subjected ourselves to the 14-hour plane trip. We were looking for hot summer days and clear blue skies. But, it was cool, down right cold at times, and raining some part of most every day. "More rain than New Zealand has seen in the summer for at least 80 years" is the topic of discussion with New Zealanders. The newspaper headlines the massive destruction at the tip of the North Island due to flooding.

This afternoon the sky is again filled with clouds waiting for the sun to reappear. We've disembarked the ferry for a short stop over in the picturesque seaside town of Russell which is only one of many in the Bay of Isles at the upper part of the North Island, and we've taken a seat at a small round table on the edge of the beach as we wait for our soup-cup size lattes, which we've discovered to be a New Zealand ritual.

On the shore, partly in the water, are three lonely, abandoned, brightly colored kayaks. Their passengers, three healthy, strong, sun-tanned Aussie lads, have retreated to the next table and are partaking in another New Zealand ritual, dark and frothy Australian beer.

We all wait.

There, there it is now, the sun. Quickly the kayaks are again filled with excited youths, strong tanned arms pushing them out in the sparkling water.

Now we are also ready to continue our foot adventure in this historic town. As the clouds return the ferry calls for our departure and return to Piaha for an overnight stay before the next day's travel, and probably more rain.

# Summering in Reno

Andrew Ivanov

Reno in June, summering in the afternoon's heat,  
With the breeze like a fresh gale blowing not missing a beat.  
The brightest sun with blistering force,  
Not a cloud to temper the sun's course.  
Sierras, not a speck of the winter's snow,  
Melted in May and rushed down below.  
2004 summer is almost into full flush.  
Days are hot, nights are cold,  
Winters tend to freeze our tush,  
And make us feel slightly old.  
As I once was a warrior of tart,  
Now I've turned into crusty old fart,  
And do today again tomorrow,  
As pains reveals my age and sorrow.  
Words, words, words so many words,  
Where are your pleasures?  
In the sounds of life and mind treasures.  
Complexity the culprit of our soul,  
Love and knowledge I must extol.

*Andrew Ivanov's personal confessions are a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir with idiosyncrasies, while he's in his Reno residence.*

# Stranger Danger

Joe Parks

On the second day of summer, I was starting to drive out of the cul-de-sac on which I live when I saw a lad standing on the right side of the street. He was dressed in street-hockey gear -- helmet, pads, roller blades -- and he held a hockey stick in his gloved hands. A net rested on the street beside him. I slowed my car and lowered the passenger-side window.

"Do you know how to yell 'GOAL?'" I asked the boy. He's a neighbor's grandson and I had talked to him before, several weeks ago.

He hesitated, giving me a blank, quizzical, almost frightened look. Then, his face lighted up with a wide grin and he said in a strong voice, "Yeah!"

I gave him a thumbs-up and drove on.

The boy's hesitation made me ponder. Why are so many kids today (not necessarily this lad) and for the past several years, so hesitant, if not downright afraid, to speak to strangers, strangers to them incidentally but people who live in the children's neighborhoods and have lived there, perhaps for many years? Honestly, when my friends and I were young we were never like the scared children I see today. In Sunnyvale, California, during the 1990s, people walking children in strollers or holding toddlers' hands would move off the sidewalk as they approached me, as if I were the newcomer intruding in their neighborhood. How strange, I thought, how unfriendly. I would talk to the adults. They would react with embarrassment, afraid to talk, perhaps not knowing my language. I saw myself slowly become an outlander in my neighborhood of thirty-five years. If I'd stayed in Sunnyvale, I'd have made a sandwich board that read something like this: I've lived here for more than 3 decades. I'm not only certifiably friendly (references from wife and friends available on polite request) but I've also been known to be helpful to newcomers and am considered lovable by some.

You may have encountered the same fear-induced, stranger-danger thinking, though to call it thinking is to dignify this behavior with a word it doesn't deserve. Really, no thought is involved in such fearful behavior. I spoke to one young mother about stranger danger, mentioning especially its exaggerated nature. She looked at me with eyes round with fear and said, "Stranger Danger. Yes, stranger danger. It's good for children," and scuttled off. How sad.

I've even seen some folks out walking their dogs move off the sidewalk and into the street when my wife and I approach. Really, neighbor, I won't hurt your Jack Russell and I certainly don't fear it.

When I was growing up -- and on into the 1980s -- some, perhaps most, adults taught their children how to cope with encounters with strangers. Be a little cautious. Be prepared, Exhibit stark, speechless fear -- never. In those, not-so-long-ago days, dog-owners hauled in on their pets' leashes; they didn't move off the sidewalk into the street. They taught their dogs how to behave. A simple concept. What happened to it? Why do people react with thoughtless fear whether they're walking with their children and someone unknown approaches or they're walking with their dogs and someone unknown approaches? Doesn't make sense.

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The Truman years were winding down. It was a time of peace and prosperity and fulfilled hopes. My buddies, Dave and Paul, and I were looking forward to another bright, hot, sunny day in early summer. School was out. It was time for picnics, swimming, and baseball.

We lived in a circular neighborhood. I lived on Hillcrest Road. It was a straight street that ran up hill from Brook Road past several other houses to my house (my parents', really). Brae Burn Road came up hill from Pleasant Street, crossed the top of Hillcrest Road at my house and curved around to stop at Hillcrest Road several houses away. At that corner, the original mansion built on the circle still stood. It was filled at that time with the Cook family and its many children. The two streets that made the circle had been built right on a horse track that was part of the grounds surrounding the old mansion, one of many large houses built in Milton, a town south of Boston, in a time when both horse-drawn carriages and horseless carriages carried those who could afford to leave the city. By the late 1940s, Milton had become the hometown of lower middle-class families such as mine.

The neighborhood houses were built around the inside and outside of the circle. Most were different from each other, built at different times, not all at once as in a subdivision. Backyards were divided one from another, not by wooden fences, but by hedges, some hiding wire fences. Dave, Paul and I could lace our way through the hedges and across the backyards, avoiding the hidden wire fences. We had many hiding places in those backyards. At least, we thought we did.

Paul, Dave and I played in the streets and backyards of this wonderful circle for many years, for the eternity of our youth, in fact. We'd play baseball and tag football on Brae Burn Road with the "little kids." Sometimes, dads and "big" brothers would join us. One day, the three of us, naturally, we often thought of ourselves as the Three Musketeers, the three of us were walking toward Dave's house when a black four-door Dodge sedan, perhaps a 1940, pulled into the curb some fifty feet in front of us. No other cars were parked in the street; neighbors kept their cars, one to a household, in their driveways or garages. We found the action of this auto strange. We'd stopped our progress, then started again when

the passenger-side door was opened and a bald-headed man turned on his seat and leaned toward us with one foot on the curb.

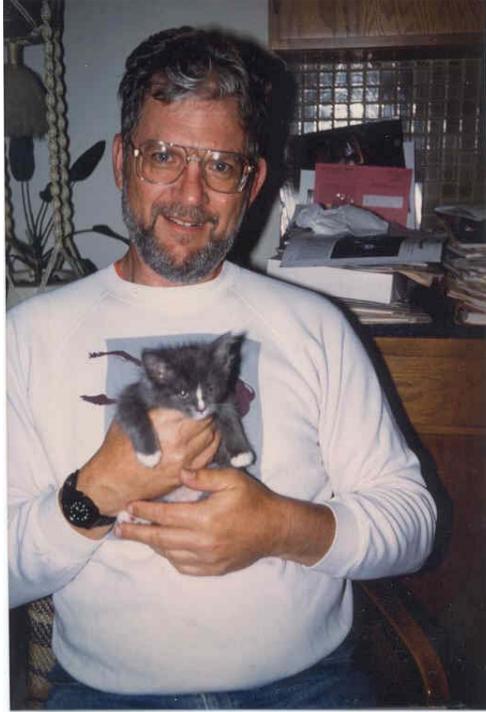
Then, so help me, this blockhead said, "Would you like some candy, little boy?"

We stopped again, incredulous. How could he be so stupid? We laughed aloud. One of us commented, "What an idiot." Then, the adrenaline kicked in. We ran off on three different paths, guffawing, and shouting insults no adult had taught us until each of us was quietly lost in a backyard. Every now and then, one of us whistled. We followed each other's signals until we emerged on the other side of our neighborhood circle in time to watch the black Dodge drive by, turn on Hillcrest Road, and head down toward Brook Road. Too bad we hadn't been able to read the car's license plate.

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"Mystic River," an awful novel by Dennis Lehane, revolves around a fictional boy who did go off in a car like the black Dodge and his doing so ruined his life. Fictional though they may have been, what had his mom and dad taught him? His two friends who were with him at the time didn't go and one told him not to. Paul, Dave and I had been well trained, exactly how, I can't recall. But I know we didn't react with fear. We didn't freeze up as did the fictional lad in "Mystic River." We never stepped off curbs because we feared strangers. We walked right up to dogs and made them our friends. I must say that I believe we were taught and we learned how to think when accosted by danger. We were taught and we learned how to read and assess the behavior of people and dogs we didn't know. "Does this person or animal mean us good or ill," was a question in our minds.

When we saw that black Dodge stop, that question came to mind. When the car's door opened, that question blazed in vivid neon. When the creep offered us candy, the question had been answered. We had the jerk nailed and we hightailed it. No sweat. A B C. And, though we were scared, we had our fear under control. We didn't stop thinking. The butterflies were flying in formation because we knew how to deal with this real stranger danger, easily distinguishable from older neighbors strolling through their own neighborhood. We'd been taught a realistic way to deal with the danger. Too bad such teaching has been avoided for the past several years.



*Peanut the kitten posing with Joe.  
At least Peanut found Joe lovable.*

# Hampton Roads

Ernest G. Hanowell, MD

The Hampton Roads is not a highway. It's the connecting link of sea between the Chesapeake Bay and the James River. It is miles wide, and on the opposite side of Hampton Roads is the large Norfolk Naval Base. I especially enjoyed the US Naval Battleships which forged their way to the Port of Norfolk. They would refuel and renew and return to their task of protecting the East Coast. I could see their vague outlines from the banks of the waters of the Hampton Roads from Newport News, Virginia. Here I lived as a boy at age seven. It was both an exciting and possibly an educational period.

Living on Hampton Roads was also a delight afforded to my pal and constant companion. We were able to visit the shore and sand banks of the Hampton Roads. He was my dog, Jaggs. The name, at the time, seemed appropriate to me. Neither the name, nor the dog, was beautiful to others. But to me at age seven, as my constant companion, as well as my protector, Jaggs was an object of my intense love. I did not care that some of my family thought that my dog was both ugly and a definite nuisance.

It did not disturb me that he was prone to conflict, constantly, with another non-descript canine, which lived on Buxton Avenue, which ran from the Kecoughtan Road to Buxton Avenue near the shore of the Hampton Roads.

It was customary for that dog named Beauty to be loose in his front yard on the opposite side of the road. I liked to return home on his side since his fence was on my right side. But Jaggs, to avoid his customary conflict with Beauty, walked on the opposite side of the road. Occasionally, however, Beauty would have hunted the opposite side of the road from his house. The conflict that ensued with Jaggs, as always, was violent.

My only recourse was to run to Mrs. Jones' house to borrow her watering hose and soak the dogs with water. This abbreviated the violent conflict. It annoyed me, because I always felt that the Jones' dog was at fault for being on the wrong side of the road. Indeed, before the conflict, Beauty was truly beautiful; but after the conflict, that was no longer the case.

I did not care at my age that Jaggs was a part mixture of Airedale and Collie - which was indeed a colorful, but not visually beautiful mixture. Jaggs was considered by my older sister to be a nuisance, and ugly and a totally undesirable creature. However, her high school year book described her as both "kind" and "beautiful." I also did not care at my age that my sister was beautiful. Scarcely a night passed when she did not have a date - which I found tolerable - but also a distinct nuisance.

Jaggs liked seafood! He constantly foraged on the banks and shallow water pools for tasty morsels. He did not care whether the seafood was old or fresh; he was only concerned to satisfy his prodigious appetite. He never seemed to care about the degree of decomposition of those, to him, attractive morsels. His appetite seemed to be unending, and his odor, at times, was that of dead seafood. I didn't care! Some people thought that his yellow orange coat was terribly unattractive. I didn't care; I wanted him to be my constant companion and I petted him constantly. I was never lonesome when he was with me. I really believed, at that time, I preferred him to my older sister who was about 21 years of age. She always expressed her opinion that I was a "cute child" and "adorable." She expressed her feelings to her boy (of which she had many) and girl friends. I always hated that – and at times – I felt I hated her (but later, always relented the feelings).

One evening, I returned home after Jaggs had completed his foraging on the beach for seafood. I have to admit that he had a distinct odor of faded seafood. I didn't care! I patted him with joy and satisfaction and was happy for his company. My older sister came home from work and entered our house. She exclaimed, as she always did, "I've got a date. Who let that horrible dog in the house?" Jaggs appeared to be horribly concerned and indeed mortified. He put his tail between his legs and lost his nearly continuous smile and went to the door to be let out. At that point I hated my sister! I revealed my innermost thoughts to her without reservation. She seemed unconcerned and just patted me on the head. At that point I wanted to kill her or something.

*Ernest Goddin Hanowell is a retired cardiologist and was a member of the National Heart Institute. He served in the U.S. Public Health Service, retiring as a Coast Guard Colonel in 1967. He is a former FBI agent and served in the U.S. Army during World War II.*

# The Fourth of July Celebration

Betty Lou Marquardt

## A Hot Summer Day Or Night

Summer days in August can be relaxing and pleasurable but some that I remember convince me that I don't want to go the place hosted by a man with horns and a red suit and I don't mean Santa Claus. To say the 100 plus degrees are dog days of summer is to malign the canines. The British sing about mad dogs and English men going out in the mid day sun, suggesting that they have a serious mental problem in doing so.

When the temperature had climbed to 108 degrees before noon and there was no air conditioning mother's plan B went into affect, with the first order of business being to close all of the windows through-out house and draw the curtains, to try and keep the early morning cool inside the house. And then Mothers Plan B was set into motion - move to the basement. The basement was a dance studio so was finished off and not dank and dreary, and cooler than any place else in the house.

The camp cots were set up as well as the sewing machine and ironing board because daily life had to keep going but certainly at a slower pace. There was a root cellar in the basement where potato, apples and mother's canned fruits and vegetables were stored so food was always available. I always had a book; a deck of cards and the monopoly game was ready to go and my favorite pillow for napping but my favorite past time was playing pretend.

The walls were painted as a mural to connote a Sunday in the Park at the turn of the twentieth century. The ceiling was painted to look like blue sky with billowy, white clouds. The walls depicted a park setting with big trees, a gravel path and park benches. There were strollers passing and people seated on benches as though they were watching the people or just to "stop and rest a spell." A very tall elegant lady was strolling by dressed in a long, white summer dress with a high neck that had a touch of lace around the edge. The waistline was cinched in and the skirt was finished off with a ruffle that was edged in lace. Even though she had a parasol she wore a wide brimmed hat to protect her delicate skin from the sun. Running ahead was a little boy in short white pants, knee high socks, black shoes that buttoned up the side to the ankle, a sailor blouse and a little round sailor hat. He was rolling a hoop with a big stick and his little, brown dog was chasing after the hoop.

Skipping along side the tall lady was a little girl wearing "Mary Janes" and white knee high socks. Her dress was short with a full skirt, high neck and a big, blue

sash around the waist. Her hat also had a brim with a blue ribbon around the crown and trailing down the back. She had a little rag doll in hand that showed it got lots of attention. There were other figures sitting, standing and enjoying the day. I would lie on my cot and pretend I was in the picture with the elegant lady and little girl. My imagination transported me into another time if only for a short few minutes. Did I mention that plan A was to stay upstairs and try to cope with the intense heat.

The hot day would turn into evening and we would go back upstairs and open the house and let the cool evening breezes blow through the house to cool it down so we could sleep. Sometimes Mother would make a “shake down” with blankets, put them on the floor under the “grand” in the living room. But if it didn’t cool off enough we were back to the basement to get some sleep.

When the temperature was “tolerable”, which meant under 100 degrees, I loved to go outside and play. My friends and I would make chains from clover flowers and sometimes if we found a four-leaf clover it was a sign of good luck forever. The chains became bracelets belts or halos to crown our heads.

I loved to lie on the grass and watch the big clouds roll by and as they took different shapes. A big round one could look like a bear, or a donkey with big ears. They took on shapes as only my imagination allowed. However when the clouds started getting really big and black we knew that a storm was on its way. There are two kinds of storms one was with wide rolling thunder and heat lightning that spread across the sky and held no rain but the other kind was scary and sent me running for the house. A bolt of lightning would light up the sky and then we would wait for the thunder. If it took a few seconds then that meant the strike was a long ways away, but if we could see a bolt coming close with an immediate clap of earth shaking thunder we knew the strike was very close to where we were standing and that we’d better not be under a tree because if the lightning hit the tree we could be struck. The rule was always be in the open but better still be inside a shelter. The best storms were the ones that ended with a big rainbow-arching overhead. This meant good luck and especially if we could find the pot of gold that sitting at the very end. Needless to say it has never been found.

## Summer Nights

Nighttime generally offered respite from the heat and fun things to do. Supper was on the screened porch with Citronella candles lit to keep the mosquitoes away. After dark we would go outside and star gaze. Pollution was not an issue so we could clearly see the Milky Way, shooting stars and look for constellations. Closer to the ground we would see the glow of fireflies and would catch them to make jewelry. First thing to do was get them into a bottle and then carefully take them out one at a time pinch off their tails that glowed and put that on a finger so

it looked like diamond ring, the more the merrier. To my knowledge these are only seen in the Middle West.

Summer storms were really spectacular and scary with earth shaking claps of thunder, and lighting that made it as bright as daylight and scary. When the thunder got too loud I would go jump in bed with mother and Daddy where I was safe. There was a barrel set outside by the drain spout where the rainwater could be collected for the purpose of washing our hair. It was pure and soft. The rules were every night we must brush our hair 100 times and once a week we washed our hair with rainwater because it was pure and made our hair shiny and healthy looking. Bathing was another weekly practice but not in rainwater. To wash hair or body any more than weekly was not healthy, and wasteful.

On vary rare occasions it was possible to see the Northern Lights, which made for exciting conversation for days to come. Life was so simple and not threatening except for the storms.

## The Fourth of July

Celebrating the 4th of July was always done and only on that specific day. Not any date closest to a weekend to make a three day holiday from work. The preparation started days earlier with the bunting hung around the front porch and the American Flag prominently displayed. The croquet set and a volleyball net were set up for activities to keep the children busy. The kitchen was a buzz for days with apple pies to be made, and cakes and cookies. The eggs had to be hard boiled and stuffed, plus the potato salad needed to be made and the chicken southern fried. Two things had to be prepared ahead of time, first of which was the Root beer. It took up to six weeks for it to be fermented by the fourth. Daddy was in charge of this with a little help from my sister and me. He got out the glass bottles that were sterilized. The caps and caper were set out and the ingredients were set out in order. There was sugar, brewers yeast, root beer extract and water. These had to be in exact proportions or the results caused a major problem.

He very carefully measured the ingredients into a big crock and then filled each bottle, but not clear to the top. After the bottles were all filled and capped they were placed on their sides in a strategic place either in the cellar or under the house. As the day grew closer they were checked to see if the yeast and sugar were building up gases to make the root beer bubbly.

But if the weather got too hot the yeast and sugar built up a full head of steam. Then a bottle would explode, and on more than one occasion a chain reaction set in and a whole bunch of bottles would blow their caps and break up. The opposite could happen if the weather wasn't warm enough, in which case we had no bubbly root beer to drink.

The other major project that had to happen was the homemade ice cream. This was done the morning of the fourth. The first decision was what flavor and what recipe to use. Daddy preferred the regular double whipping cream and vanilla and Mother preferred the egg custard type. As to the flavor, Vanilla was first choice because it could go on the apple pie but other times it might be fresh strawberry or chocolate. Since Daddy was the one in charge he usually got his way. The ingredients were all mixed and poured into a long metal pan that fitted down into a wooden bucket. The dasher was a series of wooden paddles on a metal rod. This was placed into the pan and a lid with hole topped the can. The hole was where the end of the dasher poked out and a crank was attached. Next there were layers of ice and rock salt packed around the can and the cream was ready to be churned. Daddy set the pace and then volunteers came forth to help crank the cream. When the cranking got so hard that it would hardly turn it meant the cream was frozen and ready for testing. The rock salt and ice would very carefully be pulled away and the lid taken off for the sampling of the ice cream. If it passed the taste test then the dasher was carefully removed to a dish and shared for tasting. The lid was replaced, with the hole sealed off and more salt and ice added and then covered up with a gunnysack until time to eat the ice cream.

The picnic tables had been set up and Japanese lanterns hung in the trees. When the guests arrived it was time to bring out the food plus any contributions from the guests. The tables were laden and everybody savored each dish. After supper the kids would play games, jump rope or sit and listen while the adults reminisced of times gone. Quite often somebody would bring a ukulele and a songfest would get started with everybody joining in harmony. By then the sun had set and it was time to bring out the fireworks for all to share in the celebration.

We had tiny firecrackers in long strings that would be set off in a bunch, or sparklers that were held way out in front to be lit and waved. There were pin-wheels nailed to a tree and lit spewing out bright light as they spun around, there were roman candles with many colors that shot way up in the air. This was the big climax of a wonderful celebration with the last bang and the last "oohs" and "aahs." The guests started leaving with thank you's and compliments to the host and hostess for a wonderful day. There was one exception to the sharing of the day and that was the family dogs. The loud bangs from the fire crackers scared them so if they weren't locked inside the house they would run away and hide under something and hopefully find their way back home the next day.

The Fourth of July celebration was a tradition of honoring our country that brought families and friends together for a day of good cheer and a reminder that we live in truly wonderful place of freedom.

# Early Church Experiences

Betty Waltenspiel

**M**y Mother was interested in the Unity Religion and took me to various churches when we made our trips out of town with passes from my Father's railroad job. I remember going to a large crowded tabernacle in Los Angeles and hearing Amy Semple McPherson. She was very inspiring and when she asked for believers to stand up I jumped to my feet and was grabbed by one of the ushers and taken to the front of the stage. There I was lined up with the other believers and given a special blessing. In the meantime my Mother was struggling through the crowd to make sure I didn't get whisked away.

In Salt Lake, my Mother had me attend Catholic Church occasionally. She had been raised in a Catholic orphanage and that was a very depressing location in which to grow up. I don't remember too much about catechism, but they did have a nice summer school in their church where I learned from the Mexican Sisters to embroider and do openwork with counted threads. I guess due to the mix of Unity and Catholic I didn't come out very well defined. However, at UNR I attended Catholic services and at my Mother's death she was given Extreme Unction by a priest in St. Mary's Hospital and was buried in Mother of Sorrows Cemetery.

For some reason when I think of the catechism lessons I also remember the dance lessons in Salt Lake's Pioneer Park. I learned to swim in the pool after discovering that if I could float on my back there was no way I would drown. Salt Lake had also provided an open pavilion with some instructors and music for teaching the neighborhood kids to dance. I finally mastered one shuffle step in tap-dancing which when I demonstrate it invariably astonishes both my children and my grand children.



# A Summer Day

Donal Russel Turner

I remember as a young boy of seven years old, living on a small farm of about fifteen acres with my Grandparents in West Virginia. There was more rain than sunshine. However, we did have an attic with a tin roof and when it would rain my best friend Jigs, a small white and black dog, and I would climb up the ladder into the loft, lay on the hay, and listen to the rain. Occasionally the rain would turn to hail making a loud noise on the roof.

It was warm and dry. Comforting to the point sometimes I would fall asleep, being awakened by my Grandmother calling to me that it was suppertime. I did not need any coaxing because my Grandmother was the best cook, even though we had no electricity and no running water. But we did have a coal stove, a spring to carry water from, and, oh yes, an outhouse.

The one room school and church we walked to were about three miles away. It was located in Bethlehem, West Virginia.

Meanwhile, back at the farm, I had a very special place. As a matter of fact I had several places I recall that were special. This particular place was a huge rock about as large as the house. Anyway, to a seven year old it looked that big. If I was careful, with a lot of effort, I could climb to the top of this rock. There was no vegetation except a crack in the very top about three feet long and through this crack grew a gooseberry bush about two feet tall with berries that had stickers so sharp you could not get to them. I decided this had to be the forbidden fruit the preacher had talked about. I knew Grandmother would know. You see, my Grandmother would sit in her rocking chair and read the Bible out loud while I was playing with my cars around the chair. My Grandmother explained that the gooseberry bush was not the forbidden fruit. And, since this bush was so important to me, she explained there was indeed a bush in the Bible, and while Moses was tending the sheep an angel appeared in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses noticed that the bush did not burn up and God told him to remove his sandals for this was Holy ground. Well, you can imagine my delight. I had my own Holy Boulder with a bush that did not burn up and I did not have to remove my sandals. I went barefoot all summer.

*Don's Grandmother was the most important person in his early years. Don raised nine children, went to Reno Business College, and worked construction for 20 years in the Reno area. He served aboard ship in the U.S. Navy in the American Theatre, South Pacific Islands, and the Asiatic Pacific.*

# Summer Senses

Carolyn Emery

The extended light of a summer day  
Shifts my reality from hypnotic routine to mystical magic.  
The sounds of birds and family laughter,  
The smell from the bar-be-que and tanning oil,  
Fluffy images floating in the clear blue sky,  
Transport my senses.  
I am free.  
I am peaceful.

The brilliant sunset of an evening sky  
Shifts my reality from a sparkling summer day to a soft night trance.  
The sounds of crickets and a ceiling fan,  
The smell of cooling air and a bubble bath,  
The sight of fireflies and candlelight,  
Transport my senses.  
I am free  
I am peaceful.

Oh silence,  
Oh restful bliss,  
Oh summer day,  
Oh summer night.

# A Colorado Summer Day

Lois Smyres

**A**s I walked down the lane my eyes lit on the yellow sulfur butterflies flitting over the purple blossoms in the alfalfa fields. I was on my way to my favorite playground – two old wooden freight wagons with long tongues that might have been pulled by a team of horses or oxen. They were abandoned and sitting on a hillside, but they were my playhouses now. I pretended I was a pioneer. I had searched through the dump and found old cans, bottles, broken plates and cups, and pans with holes – useless items that had been discarded, but to me they were treasures to be used to stock my wagons for a long journey.

I usually played alone because no children my age lived close by, but occasionally a friend would come for an afternoon visit. Once we rigged up a phone line using string and tin cans so we could talk from wagon to wagon. We ended up shouting to each other, but pretended our “phones” worked.

Butterflies had collected near a shallow puddle made when water from a recent rainstorm collected in a rut in the road. I didn't want to scare them away so I walked slowly toward them. As they drank they opened and closed their beautiful wings.

“I love butterflies, don't you?” a voice behind me said.

I jumped and the butterflies scattered. Whose voice was that? I had been playing by myself in the wagons, pretending to be a pioneer.

When I turned there stood a girl about my age, but certainly not dressed like me. I had on shorts but she had on a long cotton dress, shoes with high tops and on her head she wore a sun bonnet. Her braids hung down below her shoulders.

“Who are you? How did you get here?” I asked.

“Why, I'm Lavinia and I'm traveling with this wagon train to California.”

I looked around and there were wagons moving slowly by us. The wagons were pulled by teams of oxen. People of all ages were walking along beside the wagons. A few men were riding horses.

We started walking along with the other people. My new friend and I talked about the butterflies we had seen. A woman came over to us and asked if we would play with her baby. She was not feeling well and wanted to rest and ride in the wagon for awhile. Walking in the sun was tiring, but we happily took the baby and sang and played with him.

I saw a muddy puddle beside the road where butterflies had landed and were opening and closing their wings and drinking. I rushed over to look at the butterflies and called to Lavinia to come and see them. When I turned to look for her she was gone and the wagons were gone and I was standing alone near my two abandoned wagons on the hillside.

In the afternoon my Dad rings the dinner bell. Everyone comes in from the fields or, in my case, the wagons, and goes to the house. Piled on the ground are watermelons he has brought from the field. My Mom slices the melons into big chunks and to escape the heat of the day we sit under the shade trees and gorge ourselves - spitting the seeds on the ground and letting the juice run down our chins.

*Lois' father grew cantaloupes, watermelons (with seeds), and seedless watermelons for an agricultural seed company.*

# A Summer Afternoon at the Ball Game with my Dad

Joe Parks

**B**oth my dad and I grew up near Boston, Massachusetts, he, in Roslindale during the 1910s and 1920s, I, in Milton during the 1940s and 1950s. Soon after Dad came home from Europe after World War II, he started taking me to ball games. In his youth and mine, Boston was, and is today, a so-called great sports town. You have only to know the legends of Babe Ruth and the Boston Red Sox or the magnificent stories of the Boston Celtics' many championships to understand why Boston is such a great sports town. In addition to the professional teams such as the Red Sox, the Celtics, the Boston Braves in National League baseball and the long-running Boston Bruins of the National Hockey League, Boston has colleges and universities that field teams in the four major sports and many of the minor ones.

Track was my dad's sport at Boston Latin School, the oldest public high school in our country, but he tried football, too. Because Dad was skinny but fast, Head Football Coach Charley Fitzgerald put my dad on the kickoff team. (Coach Fitz was still an assistant coach when I played at Latin School some twenty-eight years later.) A kick-off team needs at least two speedy guys who can run down the field and, among other things, yell at the player trying to catch the football and maybe make him drop it.

The City of Boston bought its high-school football players their uniforms including their football shoes, called cleats. Sometimes, the equipment did not fit the players. My dad with his size eight-and-a-half, C-width shoe was issued twelve D's, or so he claimed. These over-sized cleats, he told me, hampered his progress as he began his dash down field on his first kick-off. Running down field fast to harass and tackle the player who received the kick-off was Dad's job. Despite the overlarge shoes, Dad pumped up his speed, lifting his knees to avoid stumbling over the toes of his cleats. Alas, he stumbled nevertheless, rolling over and over until he came to a stop as the player my dad was expected to tackle ran over him and up the field. After the game, Coach Fitz asked my old man to turn in his uniform, including the out-sized cleats.

This mishap did not deter my dad from his love of sports. In his day and mine, no Little League or Pony League interfered with pick-up games of football, baseball, and hockey. We did it our way. That may not have been the correct way, but we liked it that way. We could play in a game at almost any time.

When I was eight years old or so, Dad took me to a Boston University football game one Saturday near summer's end. The College of the Pacific was the

opponent for the BU Terriers that day. The COP Tigers came all the way from California to play in Boston. That was exciting all by itself, but even more exciting was the Terriers' play against the west-coast power house. The game turned in BU's favor when its fullback, Sam Pino, broke through the COP defensive line and into the secondary. Sam wore a white helmet that made his head look like a battleship's cannon shell. He'd put his head down to blast defenders out of his way. Sam was running alone, twenty yards past the line of scrimmage, his bullet head thrown back and arms pumping vigorously. Suddenly, the football squirted out of his grip. It just popped out of his pumping right arm. The ball came out in front of Sam and, instead of rolling to one side or the other, that ball bounced straight up, not something one would expect from the oddly shaped football. Sam hesitated for a beat, then scooped up the wayward ball and charged on down the field. Unfortunately, Sam was not quite as alone as he'd been before he dropped the ball and, as a fullback, he was not as fast as COP's defensive backs, so he didn't make an eighty-yard touchdown run but he did make it to COP's ten-yard line. BU scored a touchdown from there.

Sam's exciting run sold me on going to ball games with my dad. He encouraged me to go ahead and cheer as much as I liked. I certainly yelled loudly when Sam made his one-bounce run against the Tigers of COP.

After going to a number of baseball games with my dad over the next few years, my neighborhood pals, Paul and Dave, and I along with a couple of other guys eagerly went to a Red Sox game at Fenway Park one April afternoon shortly after Opening Day. We were too young to drive, so we hitchhiked to the streetcar stop in Milton Lower Mills where Baker's Chocolate was made. With the delicious smell of that chocolate all around us, we hopped on a car to continue our journey. At Ashmont Station in Dorchester, the streetcar's last stop, we descended to the platform, found the stairs and headed down to board the subway train. At Park Street Station in Boston, we left the train and mounted the stairs to board another streetcar that took us to Kenmore Square. From there, we walked the short distance to Fenway Park.

Unfortunately, in our enthusiasm for baseball, the warm-weather sport, we had forgotten that it was April, that is, early spring and still cold and damp in Boston. Our light clothes did not protect us from the chill of the gray and windy weather during that day game. Oh, we started out fine. We'd arrived in time for batting practice. The Red Sox's Ted Williams, the Splendid Splinter and greatest hitter in Major League Baseball, had taken up his left-field position to shag fly-balls during BP. We clambered down the stairs of the almost empty, windblown left-field stands and hung over the wall that intersects with the Green Monster (not so named at the time), the forty-foot tall wall in Fenway Park's left field.

Ted caught a fly and Paul, daring all, yelled, "Hey, Ted, up here." That was pronounced "hee-yah," two syllables without an R sound.

Ted turned and threw the ball right into Paul's waiting hands. We were thrilled and voiced our thanks to our hero in left field. We wandered through the nearly deserted stands admiring Paul's baseball. I wonder if he still owns it.

We could sit almost anywhere but soon found the exposed seats we'd chosen near the field a bit too chilly. Only a few fans attended the game, yet we saw much scrap paper, hot-dog wrappers, paper cups and the like, blowing about in the wind. Perhaps the fans were eating a lot in an effort to stay warm. With hardly a word to one another, we boys gathered up this wind-blown flotsam and jetsam. The lower stands held all the sparse audience, so we moved back to the deserted upper reaches of the left-field stands and stacked up our paper treasures. They began to blow away, so we held them in place. Someone pulled out matches, struck a few, caught a flame and lit our stack of trash. Yippee! Warmth. Our hands were instantly heated, so we backed away from our little fire. The capricious wind broke up the stack and blew bits of burning paper all through the stands. We heard shouts, looked up, saw guards advancing toward us and took off running. We didn't stop until we reached Kenmore Square Station. Finally, our run had warmed us up.

A few years later, I felt bold and scared when, as a junior, I cut class one afternoon from Latin School and walked over to a Red Sox game at Fenway Park with classmates. The weather was warm and the game, I guess, was exciting but, as an already practicing worrywart, I can't say I enjoyed the game much. I learned though the next day that we'd picked our time well. The month was June, the last month of school with only three weeks of classes left. The Latin School masters, as they were known, let our absences slide. From that episode, I learned that, to get away with a goof, timing is everything.

Years earlier during the summer following Sam Pino's exciting run, I learned an important lesson when Dad took me to Braves field for my first big-league baseball game. Fantastic. If you love baseball and have attended games, you know. The hot sun (hopefully). The players striving on the field with its neatly mown grass and its curves and straight lines. The constant murmur of the crowd (if it's big enough) erupting into a roar of glee at runs scored or crucial double plays made by the home team. Johnny Sain. Al Dark. Eddie Joost. Eddie Stanky. Warren Spahn. These were among the men who played at Braves Field. What a thrill: at least until an umpire made a bad call. Then the noise from the crowd was one of censure and disapproval. Hmm, I mused: You can do that to an authority figure, boo him and yell insults at him? I very likely did not think "authority figure;" adult pain in the neck was more likely.

Events did not go well for the Braves that day. Difficulties and unfair treatment mounted against the Braves until I personally could take it no longer. As the noises of crowd disapproval once again rose and then subsided, I rose to my full four-and-a-half-foot height. The crowd noise surprised me by disappearing

entirely. Nevertheless, I piped up with: "Hey, Ump! Go stick your head in a bucket of water three times and pull it out twice."

You could have heard the proverbial pin drop. I think I heard one or two. I looked left and right and down through the stands. I dared not turn around. I passed on the idea of looking at my dad but, out of the corner of my eye, I could see he was looking straight down at the field, highly focused. The umpire obviously had not heard my boyish insult but the fans for rows around had. A few faces, expressionless, turned toward me and then away. I sank, red-faced, into my seat and shrank down into it, hoping to melt between the seat's slats. Oh, geez, I was dying. but I have to admit, I learned a good deal about timing and brevity when it comes to game-time outbursts that day.

Yet, I'm not sure I've learned this lesson well. One scorching afternoon several years later when I was working at Hewlett-Packard, a couple of co-workers said, "Let's go to the game."

To do so, we'd have to play hooky from HP. Playing hooky had worked so well when I was a Latin School junior (almost a senior) that I said, "Fine. Let's go."

The time was late morning, the month, September when the weather warms up in the San Francisco Bay Area. The three of us piled into a car and traveled up to Candlestick Park. We bought inexpensive seats way up above third base. The upper stands were empty, not because of the weather, but because the Giants were playing lousy baseball and had no post-season expectations. The weather was delicious: eighty-six degrees at game time. One of my buddies spotted another guy we knew sitting behind the Giants' dugout way down below us and over on the first-base side. He had such a good seat because he was dating the granddaughter of the Giants' owner.

"Hey," we yelled and waved our arms. The 'Stick was so deserted that our friend sitting behind the dugout heard us and waved us on down to sit with his party. Neato. We didn't hesitate. We, too, sat in the hot sun behind the dugout, even stripping off our neckties and shirts to fry our skins. Eventually, as fate would have it, the home plate umpire made a terrible call on a pitch to a Giants batter. We experts could see that clearly and began to berate "Blue," the universal name for the ump. I just didn't think that "Blue" was specific enough.

"What's that ump's name?" I asked in general.

"Davis," said my friend with a program.

"Hey, Davis, you're a bum. Get outta here, you bum, Davis," I hollered.

The large man standing in the on-deck circle and wearing a Giants baseball uniform started toward me, swinging two bats, then tossing one aside, menacing me with the other. Holy mackerel, I thought hastily, what have I done?

"Why's he doing that?" I asked the guy with the program.

He was most informative. "That's Chili Davis," he said.

"Oh," I said, then, "Not you, Chili, not you. The ump. I'm yelling at the umpire."

I sank into my seat just I had some many years earlier, dying of embarrassment. I bought a beer for everyone.



*Joe Parks (right), with friends Paul (left) and Joe's brother Bill (middle) at Dennisport Beach, August 1950.*

*Joe was born in Milton, Massachusetts, in 1938 and fled that state for California at the age of 23. With his second marriage, he hopes he's found the right spouse, and so does she. They've lived in Sparks since December 2002.*

# Shanghai Noon (Shanghai, August 1945)

Andrew Ivanov

The Shanghai's noon, in the August's sun and heat,  
With some angry sunrays blistering the air and street.  
The temperature of 120° in the sun's glare.  
An oven-baked experience for any pedestrian who might dare,  
To venture into an exuding steam from the sidewalk and macadam top,  
To swelter out for any length of time of walking fare.  
The streets' asphalt melts like jelly and leaves a foot print-sop.  
It had been said that only mad dogs and Englishmen  
Are out in the noonday sun, but that's not so,  
There's another one, called "lompatso."  
A rickshaw coolie taxi to get you to and fro.  
His carriage is padded with pillows slightly smudged,  
Two large pneumatic wheels, multi-patched.  
He is a marathon runner sans façon:  
A wide brim straw hat with a raggedy bandanna;  
Shirtless, black pants twice his size folded on;  
With colorful repair patches one on the other atop;  
A rope around his waist to quickly change a worn out spot.  
His a la roman sandals are resin-tire home made jobie  
He's burned, sun tanned, skinny as a rail, an old China-cabbie.  
Someone's father, husband, son?  
Impoverished need forced this mode of living to carry on.  
More rice, more rice for those he cares,  
Ignoring the high noon's heat and body tears  
He is back from a fare, drinking hot boiling water.  
The sweat is streaming from his face and back,  
The purple veins are bulging on his legs and neck.  
His breath is coming with a wheezing sound,  
The pain is in his chest he clasps his breast,  
"Ay-ya, ay-ya!" cries out he, in a gurgling sound,  
The blood begins to gush as he collapses to the ground,  
Right by the hot water hole on the melted tar.  
No one is there, but death from afar,  
A Shanghai noon's exit to nirvana for this "lompatso"  
No longer he'll hear, \*\*Koidé, koidé, asso, asso!"  
\* "hurry, hurry, go, go"

# A Hot Summer Day

Sherl Landers-Thorman

“Lunch time”

Aunt Willie's call comes from the back porch where she is putting away the washing machine. I hurry to arrange the tortoise shell lady's vanity set I have been overlong in dusting on her vanity and go to the back porch where she digs around in the pocket of her apron, extracts a quarter and hands it to me. I grasp it tightly and hurry off to the corner grocery.

It is the summer between the second and third grade for me. Willie Cahal Wilcox is my father's second oldest sister and she and Uncle Slim live four blocks over and two blocks up from our house in south-east Los Angeles. My mother is busy with my baby brother who is ill most of the time and there is never any objection when I roller skate over to Aunt Willie's to spend the long summer days.

On Monday mornings between helping to hang out the wash loads, I dust the house. My favorite rooms are the bathroom and the bedroom. Probably because Aunt Willie kept herself well powered with Mavis talcum and the wonderful smell permeated those rooms and left a fine trace of powder over everything.

A picture of the time shows a very tall woman, with a large rotund body, slender arms and legs and a mass of dark frizzy hair. Uncle Slim is taller yet, slender but very muscular. Both of them seldom smile but are great hearty laughers. Uncle Slim is a ditch digger for the WPA and Aunt Willie keeps house, cooks wonderfully, works crossword puzzles and crochets.

Meals are events at their house. First thing every morning Aunt Willie bakes a cake and frosts it with boiled icing. When done, she has one bowl, one spoon, and the top of the double boiler to wash. Breakfast is eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes or French toast and copious amounts of black coffee. Three hearty sandwiches and half the cake along with fruit and two thermos bottles full of hot coffee go to work with Uncle Slim. Dinners are served the moment Uncle Slim finishes his nightly bath and my favorite remembered meal was pork chops, scalloped potatoes, string beans, cold slaw and biscuits with the other half of the cake for dessert. The biscuits are made from the large wooden bowl filled with flour, lard, milk, baking soda and salt are added to the bowl and swished around until reaching the right consistency to pat the dough out, cut out the biscuits with a glass dipped in flour and place them on a baking sheet. They were served piping hot and everything always came out at the same time. A bit of legerdemain I have never been able to attain.

Lunch was the best time of the day. With the quarter burning a hole in my palm, I ran the half block to the corner and carefully purchased a small package of Velveeta cheese, some soda crackers and two orange Nehi's plucked out of the icy container at the last second so they would stay cold on the thirty second trip home. Aunt Willie was waiting on the back porch with two knives, two napkins and the bottle opener. While the hot, sweet smell of drying laundry, flowers, grass, and wet wood surrounded us and Prince Alibendo, her, "old black dog" sat hopefully waiting for a tidbit, we sliced our cheese put it on crackers and ate while drinking our icy Nehi's and discussed the matters of the world.

When I said "I'm not sure I can handle the spelling in the third grade." She replied, "Yes you can. I will help you and you won't have any teachers slapping you, pulling your hair, or hitting you with a ruler if you make a mistake."

She was always positive about my school but even at that age I recognized that school was not the happy place for her that it was for me. I knew she ran away when she was fourteen and went to Alaska. It was sixty years later when I realized that she, Aunt Mae and Uncle Camilla, were among those Indian children that were removed from their reservation homes and sent to boarding schools to become, "proper citizens."

Her time in Alaska was never discussed except to say, "I met Slim there; we were married and came home." Uncle Slim was referred to as her "fifth husband" when adults thought children were not paying attention. One can only imagine how hard her life must have been and I am grateful to Uncle Slim for providing her with a stable, loving and secure home for more than forty-five years.

After we finished our glorious repast Prince cleaned up the crumbs and we repaired to the shade of the front porch where Aunt Willie sat in her big wicker rocking chair, had a cigarette and worked her crossword puzzle while I read. She rolled her own cigarettes from Bull Durham that was in a carved wooden bowl with a lid along with the dark brown cigarette papers. She scooped up just the proper amount of tobacco rolled it with one hand, licked the paper, sealed it while striking the Blue Diamond wooden match with her fingernail, lit it and contentedly puffed while shaking out the match and putting it in the ash tray. A ritual that is still amazing to me and she did it all without getting a drop of tobacco or ash in her lap.

The long afternoon was spent drinking iced coffee, crocheting and with more discussion about cabbages and kings. After dinner, Uncle Slim watered the lawn while Aunt Willie and I did the dishes. In the twilight we walked to my house where I took a bath, got good night kisses all around, and went to bed. As I read under the sheet with my flashlight, I could hear my parents, Aunt Willie and Uncle Slim, and probably another aunt and uncle laughing and talking as they played cards and drank my Uncle Phil's home brew.

Is there any better way to spend a hot summer day?



*Sherl Landers-Thorman was born and lived in Los Angeles attending fourteen different Los Angeles City Schools until she graduated from high school and moved away in 1945. Many, many, many, many, moves later brought her to Reno where she discovered Lifescapes and is ever so slowly writing about those early days.*

# The Summer Yard Sale

Ellen Godwin

Spring cleaning brings forth old feelings as I brush aside the cobwebs and dusty corners of my attic. Fond memories of the grown children's toys, books, games, and, best of all, my beautiful dolls, who wear fine silky outfits. A pile of long curls adorn the delicate porcelain faces as blue-eyed lasses spring up for a historical glance at the past. Madame Alexander created beautiful dolls and more dolls. Tall beauties with splashing and winking eyes, dolls who fetch hundreds more than the original purchase price. Dolls of many small nations. Irish lace and Scottish plaid, Swiss Misses sporting the traditional red and black frocks, and, of course the United States doll. She is tall and willowy with a high spirited demeanor, delicate hands, alert blue eyes, and the color is turquoise blue for her outfit. Billowy piles of fabric, and a closely held parasol outline her face and adorn her summer bonnet. This is a doll representing Madame Alexander's worldly, Victorian beauty, a well traveled replica of a former period.

The Spring cleaning this year entails the usual collections of china, old tires, historical glass bottles from an early 1900 era used for pharmaceutical purposes, some silver bowls and pictures long over their worldly need on a bedroom wall, small kid's trinkets, tinker toys, and an old toy train. This train chugged around many a Christmas tree, many years ago. More boxes of bottles colored blue, green, and purple, and some old ink-wells, collections of a not so distant past are ready for the summer yard sale.

It takes a few rays of warm sun, and a fever to clear the past for more growth in the future. It takes an armada of old feelings to present our thoughts, feelings and collections of personal treasures.

Spring cleaning is a dark gray cloud hanging over my head after 40 years of growing collections in my attic. I am released from my duties. The clearance sale is here this summer.

As milling crowds appear for the bargains, someone picks up the beautiful aging tent, asking, "Still good when it rains?" I hear myself saying, "That tent has seen a lot of special places – yep, no leaks yet."

I muse, selling memories is a wonderful thing but I get a twinge of remorse as the bike, the tent, the many yard tools and all of my memories are sold for nickels and dimes. They assist the all time high profits at the summer yard sale. The yard sale becomes a fond memory. I have places to go and spring cleaning brings the warm, hot feelings of summer. I am moving on again. Finally, some closure and a profit of memory is solidly fixed in my mind.

# A Perfect Moment

Shirley Baran

The sun came up over a calm ocean, decorating the sky with pearly pinks and blues. But I slept through the show. After all, I was on vacation and rising early was not on my agenda.

When I finally did awake enough to get out of bed, I ambled to the kitchen in my pajamas and made a pot of coffee. Pouring a cup of the fragrant brew and savoring the aroma, I stepped out on the deck to greet the morning.

I leaned against the banister of the second story deck, watching the gulls wheel and circle over the beach, as they searched for small fish in the surf. A soft little breeze played with my hair and stole under my pajama tops, tickling the small of my back.

Below the house and across the dunes a lone walker was strolling along the beach, getting his morning exercise, followed by his dog. I watched as he and the dog left their foot prints in the sand and then saw them washed away by the incoming tide.

I thought to myself, "That is pretty much the way life is, we walk along, leaving our footprints for a short while and then time washes them away."

"O well, no need to get philosophical so early in the morning!" I thought.

Below me, in the dunes, someone's housecat was prowling for breakfast among the waving sea oats for any small rodent, unwary enough to be out and about in the morning light.

I listened to the soothing rhythm of the waves curling and crashing on the shore. I could see little sea birds running toward the water to grab a tiny mussel or crab as each wave receded and then rushing back toward shore as each new wave approached.

Then I heard small noises coming from inside the house and realized the rest of the family was gradually stirring and they would be full of energy, want breakfast, and be anxious to get going on the day's activities.

I knew I had experienced one of those perfect moments in life: solitude, surrounded by beauty, and no demands on me.

I took a last sip of coffee, emptying the cup. Glanced one last time at the circling gulls. Noticed the lone walker was now far up the beach, almost out of sight. The

prowling cat had disappeared deep into the dunes. The little sea birds continued their dance with the ocean and I turned and walked into the house to begin another day at the beach.

End

*Shirley feels that this one line says it all: "Old artists never die, they just turn into amateur writers."*

# Wayne!

Justine "Tina" Gadsdon

Wayne!

A character with a lot of character and the most unforgettable character I have ever met! I was a caregiver in a group home where Wayne was a guest for a couple of years, so I made his bed and did his laundry and cooked his meals. Sometimes when I knocked on his door to tell him it was time to come to lunch, he would sing "Who's that knocking at my door?." At other times he would sing "She'll be coming around the mountain when she comes."

One day when he was watching me dust the furniture in the dining room he said, and I quote, "If it wasn't for dust, you'd be unemployed!" He was a witty person and over the years he made me laugh a lot and I made him laugh also. On one occasion I told him that I had an extra 15 minutes if he wanted to tell me the story of his life; he laughed so hard he started to choke. After that he did tell me some things about his life. When he moved to another group home I was a care giver there for a short time and after I left that employment I went up once a week to shave him and cut his hair when he needed it and cut his fingernails and toenails. We developed quite a friendship. Otherwise I would have never had the courage to ask him if he knew what he had to do to go to heaven. He told me that he did indeed, and that he had taken care of that a long time ago.

At one time he told me that he just wanted to go to sleep, period. And I said, "...and wake up in heaven?" He said yes. I told him that would have to be in God's time and that God had a plan for him. He told me, "He'd better hurry up then." And Wayne laughed, just like he laughed when I asked him the first time if he had asked God to forgive his sins and he told me he didn't have any!

Once when I told him I would see him next time he told me, "I might not be here when you come next time." Then I asked him if he was ready to meet his maker and if he had asked forgiveness for his sins and he said quietly, "yes."

I was very deeply moved at one point when I went to visit him and I took his hand in mine to tell him I would see him next time, he kissed my hand.

I don't know why I was chosen to be in his life during his last years, but I am grateful and I know in my heart that he is with the Lord in heaven and that some day I'll see him again, and I'm looking forward to that time.



*Tina's experience as a care giver was very rewarding in many ways. Tina was born and raised in Virginia, spent many years in Stockton, California, and moved back and forth across the country since then. She has five children. Two of her children live in Raleigh, North Carolina, the rest live in Sparks, Nevada. Tina has lots of grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, even from some who said they would never get married and have children.*

# Serene and Poised I “Knit the Raveled Sleeve”

E. Louise Smith

I have always thought that women who knit have an especially serene and poised look about them.

When I was a child we had a neighbor with snow-white hair. She used to sit during the hot Ohio summer months on her front porch and knit. The glider moved slowly back and forth and the needles made a gentle clicking sound. She talked to me and listened to me, never stopping gliding – never stopping knitting. All this activity occurring at the same time seemed quite a feat to me.

One afternoon when she put aside her knitting to serve us homemade lemonade and cookies, I asked her to teach me to knit. I learned to knit and purl but couldn't seem to grasp the casting on of stitches. Soon we moved away without my ever learning this essential step.

World War II started when I was in school. In a moment of misguided patriotic fervor, I promised to knit a sweater for Red Cross Distribution and as a Home Economics project. I say misguided as I hadn't seen a pair of knitting needles since my brief introduction to them and had never learned to cast on.

It took me all year to finish that child's size sweater, and many sacrifices. The girl who taught me to cast on stitches exacted an evening's baby-sitting. She received the pay – I did the sitting. I typed twelve book reviews for the girl who picked up the neck stitches.

In the last two weeks of school, the teacher called me to her desk. With the thought of the canned tomatoes, which I had taken out of the cooker and cooled under the cold-water faucet (great was the explosion thereof) fresh in her memory, she informed me that it was either turn in the sweater or fail the Home Economics course.

Faced with this dilemma and a back, front and two sleeves in as many pieces with no idea of how to make them into a single unit, I sought out my first helper. Three nights of free baby-sitting and the sweater was finished. I was through with knitting forever.

A few years later, when I was married, pregnant and taking several summer college courses, all the other girls seemed to be knitting Argyle socks. I was fascinated with the needles, colored markers, and the many colors of yarn; also the fact that they never stopped knitting unless we had a written exam.

This versatility once again drew me. Forgetting the struggle and only remembering that I had, after all, once knitted a sweater, I hurried to the nearest knit shop.

Under the circumstances, a crib afghan seemed the thing to knit. School ended in July, a month and a half before the heir was expected. So, with plenty of free time and quantities of pink yarn, I set to work knitting through the hot Southern California days.

A month later our son was born. Free time was gone. Had it ever been? The unfinished afghan was relegated to obscurity.

Nine years later my son and I decided I should make myself a black sweater. At the time I had no glider but I felt so serene and versatile as I sat in the cool patio during the warm summer months knitting and talking to my son and his friends. I would occasionally put the knitting aside to serve cold lemonade and homemade cookies to the children.

One afternoon a little girl who had watched me closely said, "Mrs. Smith, could you please teach me to knit?"

The sweater is nearly done now except for picking up the neck stitches.

Now this is not a tale of failure as you might think. For just the other day in cleaning out an old trunk, I found the partially knitted pink afghan and pleasant memories of happy hours spent knitting came back to me. The serenity - the poise, they could be mine.

Learning, however slow, is never wasted. Almost eleven years ago in June, my grandson, Casey, was born in Reno, Nevada. I finished the granny square afghan just in time to wrap him up in it and show him off to my friends and neighbors.



# A Summer Day In Alaska

Ellen Godwin

Sweet air comes to Alaska slowly and with a limited version of sun and warmth. The air sings in from the “Pineapple Express”, or hurls itself downward from the glacial ice fields and the Yukon Territory up north. During this time, the Northern Lights dance freely across the mountain tops, and swirl around, usually in the evening and late into the night. Spring winter-green apple rays play out under an umbrella of cleverly designed theatre curtains. These curtains form a mushroom cap with long scrawny curtains like spaghetti strings wafting on the cool breezes. This is the night of dawn for summer. It is easy to see and hard to forget.

In a few weeks the theatrics turn into easy, swinging leaves, and migrating birds who wing themselves into Juneau and the Mendenhall Wetlands. Flocks of snow geese from Russia descend, and the eleven geese we count made the Auduboners happy. One was tagged, dusty and strange looking with black oily dirt, and soiled feathers. This little group found Juneau from St. Petersburg, Russia. They nested and fed on the flatlands of the Mendenhall for several weeks. They decided to stay awhile.

Some birds, like the Horned Owl, not common to the wetlands, do finally take-up residence nearby. My bedroom window faced the wetlands, a spacious platform for the moving populations as they rest and feast between windy rides aloft. Fast and swiftly moving currents carry and direct the itineraries of each visitor to the Mendenhall Wetlands. Large birds and small, tiny ounce-size birds, sometimes solo, lost and confused, take up the chance and security of the friendly wetlands and stay long seasons. This environment offers a respite to homeless wandering birds, as they find themselves hopelessly in the area for a season. The three-tone uttering of a Horned Owl is distinctive. Midnight madness, some might say. However, to my listening and the added burden of waiting for the “who-who-who” – there is a reward. The horned visitor remained in a nearby lofty tree, staying in the area for at least six weeks. Finally catching the correct thermal with its windless cheer, and the thrill of travel waiting for the next ride, the Horned Owl made its way north to the Yukon for another destination.

# August in Reno

Andrew Ivanov

August sky is blue and gray  
The summer's fires our only dismay  
Tomatoes swell to red ready for pick  
The bush beans are faulting on sticks  
Providing all you can eat buffet picks for the earwigs.  
Summer slides swiftly unnoticed by day,  
Except for 100 degrees on 2 or 3 days' stay.  
Afternoons bring stormy clouds with lightning,  
Rainy clouds smother the sky flashingly striking.  
With big rain drops but only teasing the fire,  
People gather around to stare or admire,  
Glowing flame, which flickers with orangey glow  
And brightens the mountainside which was with the snow.  
The Northwest wind with a gale force blows  
Adding rage to the fire-glow  
Providing an all out nature's fireworks.  
For kids the summer lazily drawing to an end  
Too soon going back to school and mend  
Their do-nothing days with learning  
And burning the midnight oil, cramming and moaning.

# Here I Am In 2022

June Maxwell

Thank goodness! I have an hour before my guests arrive. Plenty of time to prepare dinner, clean house and get dressed before the Jolly Dozen Centurion Senior Citizens Club arrive. My mother was a charter member of this club back in the 20's. Having only a dozen members, we meet once a month and each member entertains once a year. This is my annual dinner for the club. I think I'll wear red tonight. It sure is a lot less fuss to dress these days, however I miss the thrill of the occasional "just right" dress I used to buy, rather than the modern way of today. Never thought I'd get tired of having a new dress almost everyday and not have to worry about the closet space either.

Oh bother! Who can that be on the vis-a-phone?

"Hello, Darling, how's my favorite grandson?"

Oh dear, what is his name? I get so mad at myself. I never could remember names, no matter how many memory books I've read or how many different systems I have tried.

"Of course, Dear, I have time to listen to your very 'mostest, latest,' scientific expedition."

I wonder what it is this time. I remember now. His name is Jason. He is my daughter's grandson; that means he must be my great grands... oh no! How could she be old enough to be a grandmother? (I've just gotten used to the idea.) That makes me, how old? Nonsense, I don't want to think of things like that tonight - I'll think of that tomorrow. That boy sure has an imagination. Whoever heard of hiking trips into unknown outerspace? He would have been a good pioneer back in the 1860's. Like his great, great, great Grandfather, who was in the land rush in a covered wagon trying to find his fortune in the West.

I have always found it hard to imagine either the great land rush or probes into outer space. Why can't Jason have imaginary friends, play cowboys and Indians, or play ball? I can cope with that. Nevertheless, he is an unusual boy. I wonder what his mother is doing.

"Yes, Jason, I'm listening. Please do go, while I fill and set the 'Mixablender' for cocktails for tonight." I wish I didn't feel so guilty not giving him my full attention, but I have a great many things to finish before my guests arrive.

"What's that, Jason? Yes, I'm wearing a red dress tonight. You say it's my color? Thank you, darling, you do have such good taste. What? I am serving Bacardi

Cocktails tonight. No, I haven't set the 'Mixablender' yet. You dear boy, you are absolutely right. The color will clash with the red dress. You are just like your grandfather, God rest his soul, and he never liked clashing colors either. Did I ever tell you about the time...? I did? Oh, very well, I can't serve Martinis; I haven't time to mix them – that is one thing the 'Mixablender' cannot make correctly. It bruises the vermouth every time. How about Daquiris? They are white. Champagne? I'm serving that later. I'm so glad you agree with me."

My, what a smart grandchild I have. I don't remember ever telling him that story though.

Hope everybody will like Spinach Florentine and Capons stuffed with truffles. Now I'll just slip the last dish into the 'Rayzonisoven' and that will take care of that. No more worries about the dinner.

"You want to what! You want a trip to Earth? What does your Mother think about this? Where is she? How old are you now?" It would be nice to see him, It's been a long time since we went a Boozen' and a Cruisen' in my old red convertible. Or was that his father?

"Oh well, instead, maybe we could go to the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, for dinner. We might even get lucky and get tickets for a play. I always liked the theater at the Biltmore. It was so grand when my best friend and I went there in the 40's before the war. It would be fun to take him to see the old skyscrapers in New York, too. We could go to a nightclub or see the Statue of Liberty. If, Mom were still here she would want to go too. Hard to believe, she was only 99 years old when she left us. She was always first in line at the movies, no matter what was playing or where it was located or even if she had seen it before. Whether it was by airplane, train, car or even a buggy, if someone said go, she would beat him or her to the door. She was the worst driver I've ever had the misfortune to ride with, but she liked to drive. I don't remember her ever having an accident. When she was behind the wheel, it seemed like every one scattered. She slowed down a little after her 95th birthday.

She liked to tell stories and late in life she started to write little poems. She used my old typewriter using the hunt and peck system. She was very sentimental. When I read them I could see where there had been teardrops on the paper. Her spelling was worse than mine, but it didn't bother her. She just put her poems in a secret place under her desk. I found them years later.

She played Bingo almost every evening and she won most of the time. Never could figure out just how she did it. I don't like the game but I played with her a few times. I always lost, even when she gave me some of her winning cards. I believe her secret was discipline. The nights she won, she would replace her

losses from the winnings. She never spent more than her allotted playing money. It worked for her, but I'll pass.

I remember when my sister Wanda and I got her a vacuum back in the 30's. We all pitched in to buy her a Hoover vacuum from a door-to-door salesman. She thought it was "swell." She was excited; said it sure beat the first broom she ever had. She told us she and her brother Clark made brooms out of twigs and straw for the house. At that time they lived on a homestead some place out in the Kansas prairies.

She commented on her old sweeper - it had been a long and faithful friend. She wondered what would be next. Would you believe just a touch of the toe? I clean my floors today by stepping on any corner of the rug next to the wall. The whole floor is sucked clean in seconds into the old "grindocompacter." No dustpan, no bag to empty and nothing to push, pull, or fall over. Man, that would really blow her mind. I shouldn't have thought that. It's sacrilege. It is such a crude old-fashioned saying. I never did like that saying even when it was popular. I wonder what the current saying is now-a-days.

Mom was in a mood that day. She chuckled as she petted her vacuum. "Boy, if I'd had this when old Chief Yellow Hair and his braves came to our cabin in Kansas, I wouldn't have had to hide behind the old wood stove with Clark. Of course I'd need a little help from above for some power--? But I could have just swooped him and his braves up in my vacuum and Dad could take them back to the reservation where he worked. She really thought that was funny. However, Chief Yellow Hair did come to their cabin out in the prairie once when my grandfather Robert wasn't home. He asked for food for him and his braves. Mom, with Clark, hid behind the old wood stove. Isabel, my grandmother, fed them. They asked for whiskey. None was to be found, so they left. They never came back. Mom wondered what became of them.

I sure could think of a something to say to Jason's mother right now if she were only available. I wonder where she can be, letting that boy use the "vis-a-phone" so long. It's dreadful these days how the parents just let their children do anything they want to. In my day... I haven't time for that, it's almost time for the Jolly Dozen to start arriving. What should I do? I know, I'll tell the little dear to call again real soon. After all, a call is cheaper than a space ticket, or whatever they use now. That isn't what I always told his mother - no, I mean his grandmother. It is so difficult to keep them all straight when there are so many of the little dears. Jason is the one living on that "dealy do" in space. Never did approve of that. If the good old mother earth was good enough for my parents and good enough for me, why isn't it good enough for my grandchildren or great grandchildren?

"Apple dumpling, sweetie pie, listen to me - I must say bye-bye now. But call me again real soon, you hear now? Can you come to visit? I'll see. You are old

enough to join the Scouts of the Universe? Did I ever tell you about the time I was a scout? Well, I... don't interrupt, darling. You don't know what I was going to say. Yes, that is right. Way back then they were called Boy and Girl Scouts of America. Yes, that was a very long time ago."

Oh! Where is his mother?

"You want to come see me so I can do what? Well! I never! Jas, it is late. Go tell your mother she needs you. I don't care where she is. No, I'm not angry, why should I be angry? Yes, of course I am still a Christian. Jason, my pet, go find your mother. Goodbye."

Of all the nerve. If that doesn't beat all. Wanting to come to visit me so I can show him the Roman Ruins and the Coliseum where I had to fight the lions. Don't they teach history anymore? How old does he think I am? How dare he?

There is the doorbell. I must get a hold of myself.... Roman Ruins... Indeed! Just wait till I talk to his mother and Bonnie.

"Hello, my dear, so good of you to come. It's so nice to see you. How's everything with you and your family...?"

*Now we will be off like a herd of turtles! My father referred to turtles after completing a difficult job well done. He hoped. I hope you will have as much fun with the future as I've had creating it. ~ June Maxwell*

# Home Is Where The Heart Is

L. Chestnut Sorgen

May and early June were exceptionally cool in Arizona this year, and the nights and early mornings were a delight as the soft breezes played soothing tunes upon the wind chimes on the MacIntyre's back porch. Mac, named by and after his benefactors, lay stretched out upon his private mound of grass and earth, his head resting atop his two front paws.

He surveyed the beginning day and shifted lazily as he toyed with a notion or two. Sometimes he would amble off the top of his grassy mound, which covered the leach bed area of the septic tank, to go sniff about the oil shed where Princlene and Tabatha had retreated to spend a few lazy hours after a night of feline stalking and prowling. If he could muster the proper mood to burn up a bit more energy, he enjoyed taking off down the lane to stir the ducks from their breakfast.

The invigorating morning air made him quite mischievous, and he decided to pursue the latter. In no time at all he had irritated Gus, the neighbor's gander, who squawked furiously as he flapped back and forth across the water.

"Atta boy, Gus! Let's see you do a double backward dive," Mac chided as he loped alongside the pond, letting the mud work into his oversized, dark, motley feet. Picking up speed, he agilely executed a couple of back somersaults and grinned playfully as he continued into a high jump from a sitting position.

The ducks clamorously protested as they motored in a line toward the edge. The ewes and their lambs bleated a chaotic applause as they formed a fence line cheering section. In the morning sun Princlene altered her sleeping routine to opt for a quick grooming outside the oil house.

It didn't take long for Mrs. MacIntyre to hear the clamor and appear from the house, flailing her arms in alarm. "Mac, stop that, you naughty boy. How I'll ever break you of this crazy foolishness, I'll never know!" Watching her unconsciously move her right hand forward and upward, Mac instinctively recognized a command from the past. He couldn't resist; he knew he had one great crowd pleaser left in him. Deftly grabbing a stick beside him, he arched his back magnificently as he completed a perfect circular flip, to the delight of the spectators. Hoping for a sign of approval, he laid the stick at Mrs. MacIntyre's feet.

"You silly creature. Good for almost nothing but craziness unless it's gopher season. Now, out of here so I can get back to my chores."

Back in the comfort of his retreat, he stretched out on the cool grass of the mound, letting his mind recall the cheers and bravos of a former day. Miss Ellen was smiling at his efforts and waving her baton to motion Pepper, Minute, Jody, and the other performers on to the balance beam. He could almost feel her pass near him as she spoke in a soothing murmur, "That's my baby, good boy, Scramble. You're top dog."

He thought his heart would break just now. He could taste the exciting atmosphere that surrounded the small traveling circus where he had grown up. He loved Sadie, the weary, old elephant, who had long since retired from the ring, and now helped raise the big-top. Scramble would accompany Sadie as she used her trunk to position the huge metal poles for Merv and Harold to secure with tie clamps. The young men's muscles glistened with sweat as they rhythmically drove their sledge hammers narrowly past each other's brows to secure the stakes.

Scramble would eagerly wait for the last stake to be driven. Then Merv would reach in his pocket to pull out a treat for his little companion. Sadie would bellow with glee as she took her cue to retreat to the water barrel.

The procedure reversed after each show. After the crowd left, each member completed his responsibility, and in the wee hours of the night, the motors of the old converted bus and vans would crank and churn along the tortuous route to the next town.

The dilapidated, antique bus had blown its rear tires as it tried to cross a rocky surface on the way to Prescott one moonless, rainy night. Everyone got out to wait for the repairs, and amidst the chaos, Scramble wandered off, only to return to the scene too late for departure.

He began to realize that in the confusion no one had noticed his absence, and after wandering for days, he finally gave in to exhaustion. Crying, alone and frightened, he worried Miss Ellen and the others might never cross his path again.

Many travel-worn days later he came upon this small ranch on the outskirts of a large city. He was tired, and hungry, and the futility of searching further left him no choice but to yearn for someone to love him.

Scramble's thoughts were jarred back to his new-found friends by the sound of Gus scratching at the dirt beside him.

Gus was leaning toward a philosophical mood as he was prone to do. "I know how you feel, old friend," he lamented. "Being lost and not able to tell your story to the right party is pretty hard to bear. Just remember, your friends at the circus are even more frustrated because they don't know if you're alive or dead."

The unhappy little entertainer felt Tabatha's nose against his ear. His heart grew lighter as he talked softly, "I'm lucky to have friends like you, and the MacIntyres did take me in. I just get feeling sorry for myself sometimes when I think my talents aren't understood or appreciated."

Later, after dinner Mr. MacIntyre sat resting after a long day's work at the power plant. His elbows rested on the wooden arms of the old lawn chair, and after a moment, he moved his hands from across his lap to rest them under his chin. He spoke slowly, "You know, Martha, I've been watching Mac sleeping by my feet, and I can sense he's dreaming of where he used to be. He looks tired, Ma."

"You wouldn't a thought so this morning the way he was skitterin' 'round here. Why, it was as if he'd joined a circus or something, the way he was doin' flip flops!"

Scramble was not dreaming. This was his chance to make them understand. Princlene, Tabatha, and Gus were all urging him on, "Go Scramble. Go! Show them!"

Standing on his back legs, Scramble circled three times. Next he walked a straight line balancing on his front feet. For an encore he pulled off two consecutive back flips and came to sit in front of the man's feet.

"You're right. I think we've got a circus dog here, Ma. It's only a start, but with a little advertising about, maybe we'll be able to find Mac's old life back again for him." The old man patted the little brown head, and Scramble's eyes moistened as he rested his chin on his friend's knee.

# Snapshots of Early Summer Days

Esther Early

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. I Corinthians 13:11

Children are alchemists, you know. When given the slightest opportunity they distill the golden essence of a minute, an hour or a whole summer day in spite of leaden aspects, and store it in precious compartments of memory. They are like snapshots of summer days that can be preserved as magic potions to lighten dark and tragic times ahead, to give wisdom in making life choices, or to reminisce for auld lang syne. Just a tiny drop of the elixir dropped into the dark atmosphere of a sad and wintry day brings a smile to the heart and sunshine to a desperate soul. As we age we lose the pure clarity of heart and mind of a child, and our perceptions of life are too often filtered through fear, guilt and selfishness. Sometimes this clarity is regained toward the end of life, after a life threatening illness, or an event of some kind which focuses our attention back to the wonder of the universe. These collections of wonderful memories are antidotes for depression or the times we feel like surrendering to feelings of futility. They remind us that joy and beauty are what life is really all about or shine light on the paths ahead of us.

From birth I became accustomed to seeing far reaching vistas of mountain ranges receding into the distance, marked by sagebrush and the sparse growth of trees along canyons and gulches. Even today I feel crushed in by towering buildings and city streets, and I can breathe better when I am back in my beloved mountains where I can let my eyes rest on untamed distances. Fortunately, I have an unlimited selection of favorite pictures I can bring to mind. Even in the crushes of crowds I can still stand alone at the top of a mountain and look out over a sunset of magnificent golds and crimsons that is almost a second dimension of the earth, reaching to the sun and heaven. I can watch as it fades to a calm, quiet evening and listen to calling birds and the scurry of little animals as they prepare to go into the safety of their nests for the night. I, too, can turn to go back to the ranch house, walk through my mother's flower garden and go in to the safety and love of my family where we sit down to eat together and spend an evening by lantern light before going early to bed. We take turns brushing my mother's long black hair while she read to us. How we cry as Longfellow's Gabriel and Evangeline seek each other through the swamps in vain. And how we laugh at the antics of Penrod! Finally, Mother puts a marker in the book, and I must wait until the next evening for more of the tragic epic poem or the next story out of the Saturday Evening Post. As we settle into our beds for the night we chuckle as someone calls out the old witticism, "Good night, don't let the bed bugs bite!" How soft the cat feels as I snuggle him down between the covers



where I can put my feet on his purring body for comfort. The luxury of satin sheets and embroidered pillow cases in a hotel can never compare with this.

I awaken even before the sun emerges from his night of rest. I always come awake in one bound from sleep to full awareness, excited to experience the gift of the new day. I hurry to dress and go outside to explore as the early dawn light brightens. I hear the rooster crowing and flapping his wings to impress the hens with his authority and masculinity. I love to hear the hens clucking to their chicks, scratching the ground and exclaiming as they discover some delicious worm or some grain to share with them.

They are so comforting in their busy-body ways, except when I have to reach under them to steal their warm eggs as they sit on their nests. They may give me a sharp peck if I am not careful. Water is still running into the huge water trough and the horses and cows wander over for a drink as they start out their days. Soon someone will come to pitch hay into the mangers or along the ground where they can contentedly eat their breakfasts. The cows eat greedily because they know they can bring up their cud at their leisure to chew and reprocess the food. They greet me by tossing their heads and allowing me to stroke them and lean up against their warm sides. The horses will allow me to pet them if they are in the mood or if I have an offering of an apple or a sugar cube.

In early summer I have a regular route to travel before my breakfast. I must check the progress of the bird families. Down in the tall sagebrush there are nests of blackbirds and magpies. In the willows are killdeer nests in the ground, and up in a hollow tree are woodpeckers. I put my hand down the hole and can feel the infant birds. The emerging feathers are prickly and the babies are fooled into thinking my hand is a parent with an offering, so their beaks are opened wide and their little heads bounce around. Such a racket they make! The parents are outraged by my presence, but I only want to look at the eggs and then the babies as they grow. I am very gentle for I am in awe of how life is expressed in so many ways.

Sego lilies are lovely, each flower exquisite with its white petals and yellow and lavender throat. As the flower matures it finally becomes a dry little gourd with seeds that rattle when it is moved. Late in summer I am walking along, thinking of something else, and without noticing I move into a large patch of the lilies and the touch of my feet and legs sets the tiny gourds to rattling loudly, exactly like that of a rattle snake. Terrified, I start to run and the rattling gets worse. I think I must be in a nest of snakes. When I reach the edge of the patch, my heart pounding, I calm down enough to see how mistaken I was and I feel very foolish. Sometimes I think of that when I am in the midst of some fearsome experience, and remember to look more carefully where I am before I let the “fight or flight syndrome” take over my reaction.

People and animals who live in the desert can smell water from far away. One of the most precious memories I have is of the Little Salmon Falls River which runs just below Contact, Nevada where I was born and spent the earliest years of my life. The town and mines were further up in the hills but below are the fields, trees and willows that border the small river. A picnic on a hot, dry summer day on the banks of the stream and being able to get into the water and splash around are never to be forgotten. Preparations of frying chicken, baking cakes and potato salad seem to take forever, not to mention having to pack blankets to sit on and putting on bathing suits under our clothes. Squeezing into the car amid bitter complaints of being squashed and urging the driver to hurry are hard to endure, but the anticipation mounts as we near the turn-off into the road which leads to the river. It is just two parallel ruts, but the wonderful smell of the willows and vegetation along the river, and the sounds of the water as it runs over the rocks and along quiet pools are so exciting I can hardly stand it. Adults keep a watchful eye on the antics of the youngsters as we scream and frolic until we are so hungry and tired we come back, shivering in the shade for the food which disappears rapidly. Today, the beautiful Olympic pools can never afford the joy of the Little Salmon, but those of us who were there can always access the snapshots of those wonderful days.

My best friend is Lois. We are allowed to play only one hour at a time so we don't get tired of each other and fight. We always look forward to seeing each other. Our mothers make us take turns visiting at each other's houses. We like my house because there is the skeleton of an old car down by the dump which we can pretend to drive or use it as a play house. We can also dig out cans and bottles to set up stores and sell things to each other. At Lois' house we have to be very careful not to go into the building next door, which they own. It has dynamite in it and we might blow the whole thing up if we open the door. So we go play in the yard or the sagebrush, draw houses in the dirt and visit each other, being careful only to enter through the designated open spaces. We also play hopscotch and paper dolls. Later in life I find out that Lois' father is a bootlegger and what they have stored in the forbidden house really is dynamite of the white lightning variety. Such things have made me suspicious of what some people tell me and I like to test boundaries to make sure they are valid.

Early evenings in Contact when the light is still clear are magical times for the children. During prohibition days the agents were known as "prohis" and the fear of certain adults in the community who made their living by bootlegging must have filtered down to the children. I know now that the agents would come by stealth to surprise the scofflaws and destroy their stills, so word that they were approaching caused alarm, to say the least. My own father is a realtor and the town justice of the peace, and while he is on the side of the law he turns a blind eye to the way some folks make their living. We little ones know that "prohis" are dangerous and, according to a game we make up, when the word "prohis" is screamed, we must all run and hide. So, when one person calls out, "The prohis are coming, the prohis are coming!" we all squeal, run in all directions and hide. That's all there is to the game, but we get such a thrill out of it, that we play it for

a long time. "Run Sheep Run" is a game with a plan and rules. It lasts longer and is more fun, but I am never the captain and always a lowly member of the herd of sheep. Perhaps that is why I like to get into leadership roles in my adult life.

Blackie is not just a digger. He is an excavator of great strength and talent. He is proud of what he does and likes to show off when he finds the burrow of a gopher and sets about really making the dirt fly as he tries to catch up with the varmint. We make a good pair because I greatly admire him as he works. I sit on the ground at the side of the excavation and tell him what a good dog he is; he smiles, panting in the sun, and accelerates his mining project. Finally, he gives up and seems to shrug as if he didn't want the gopher anyway and we go back to the house to get a drink of water. Bonnie, on the other hand, makes thoroughbred red setter puppies. With one batch of fourteen we have to put half of them in a basket while the others nurse and then trade their places. She is such a good mother that all of them are fat and wiggly. What greater riches could a child have than an armful of puppies and a black digger dog? They are simple, loving and undemanding friends. We communicate. Sitting alone in an airport or train station in later years, possibly in other countries, the memory of the warmth of puppies and a good humored black dog can bring feelings of comfort and companionship from over the years.



*Watching Blackie Dig*



*Homemade Ice Cream on my 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

Homemade ice cream is not only a treat to eat but a ceremony that has been handed down for years. There has to be an appropriate occasion such as a birthday or a Sunday School picnic to set the planning process in motion. The date is set and as the day approaches, excitement and anticipation mount. It is important to be the first one to yell, "I get dibs on the beater!" This way you get

the first sample of the treat when it is finished, though you may have to defend your position from others who claim to have said the magic words before you. On the day before, the freezer is set out and put into a large washtub so the melted water won't make a huge mud puddle in dirt. A gunny sack is set out along with a large hammer. Also, Mother cooks the ice cream and flavors it with vanilla, chocolate or some kind of fruit and it is set to cool in the ice box. In the morning, a block of ice from the ice house is put into the gunny sack and everyone takes turns pounding it into small pieces. Finally, the beater is put into the freezing container, the cream is poured in and the lid placed on firmly. Then the grinding-top with the handle is placed in position, ice is packed in firmly, alternately with the salt until the freezer is full. It is important to keep turning the beater so it won't get stuck. Someone has the task of tamping the ice down and clearing the drainage hole. Ice water must not enter the container to spoil the finished product. It keeps getting harder and harder to turn the beater until finally a strong boy or man has to finish the job. The top is carefully taken off, and all exclaim over the frozen delight. The beater is pulled out and as much ice cream is taken off as possible, much to the dismay of the one who has dibs on licking the beater. Then everyone gets a little taste but the one with the dibs gets the most. The top is put back on, sealed and packed with salt and ice. The ice cream is left in a cool place to "season" until it is time to take it to its final destination, or to be opened at the end of a celebratory dinner at home. Nothing ever tastes so good again nor is any food so appreciated.

In late summer I am often given large pails and sent to pick wild currants and gooseberries from the blushes that line the stream which runs through the ranch where we eventually go to live. It is a tedious job but once in a while a taste of a berry helps. The currants are small and are vivid red and dark crimson when they are ripe. One is not to pick any green ones or put twigs and leaves into the buckets to make them look full of berries. Mother is not fooled by such tactics, and tells a story of a little girl who did this and was served a pie filled with twigs and leaves and made to eat it. On the other hand, gooseberries are much larger. They are bitter and green and many thorns prick little fingers. Mother makes delicious jellies from currants, and gooseberry jam is tolerable if enough sugar is added. Like memories that lighten life's experiences, the jellies and jams spread on homemade bread and butter add sweetness to cold days of winter.

The large horse trough drips with green moss in summer. It would almost make a wonderful small swimming pool except for that. Getting tossed in fully clothed by an irate brother and having to climb out dripping slimy green moss is not something I want to repeat. But it does whet the appetite for revenge and makes a good story at family gatherings many years later. It also is a reason for my becoming a heathen. My mother is a member of the Christian church and they believe in baptism by immersion. One day a group of adults, including a minister, arrive and after a long visit, they call me in and ask if I am ready to be baptized. Like a thunderbolt it strikes me that there is only one place with enough water to immerse someone. Cagily, I ask, "Where?" The minister says they think the

horse trough would do. For the first time in my life I am so outraged that I defy adult authority, give them an emphatic, "NO!" and march out. It is too undignified and I have a great sense of propriety. I am convinced I am bound for hell but I am a rebel and will not play that game even if God has decreed such rules.

Sounds of summer include those of the various automobiles that climb the steep road to the ranch. Each one has its own voice and we recognize most of them all. We hear the approaching vehicle long before it actually arrives, especially when it has to go into a lower gear to climb the steep grade below, the engine growling an octave lower like a huge beast. We have time to scurry and tidy the house and ourselves before the visitors actually arrive. We do not have telephones so people just come when they want to or for special occasions. They usually pick up mail from the post office in town as a courteous gesture which we appreciate, especially if there is a Monkey Ward (what we used to call Montgomery Ward) or Sears catalog. It is always exciting when we hear any engine, but it is especially so if it is strange to our ears. Anticipation mounts until the car comes into sight at the turn at the lower pasture. Then all go out to meet the people, greet them and take them into the house for refreshments and hours of visiting. There is laughter, tall tales and sad stories which I listen to without interrupting and learn the traditions and many of the values of my people. They give me a sense of belonging and tradition, even though I may be in foreign lands with customs strange to me.

Summer begins for me when school lets out. We all celebrate with a picnic up in the canyon above the mines. The hills are green with riots of wild sunflowers, bluebells, lupin, Indian paintbrush and Indian tobacco plants. They are a banquet of joyful color and fragrance upon which we can spread our blankets, play games and feast from the picnic baskets. There is great anticipation for the freedom of summer. It will pass quickly and I will hardly be able to wait for school to start. I am never bored because there are so many fascinating things to do. I love to play with paper dolls and make play houses for them, but mostly I like to play with my animal friends. I even go out into the desert around our house where I capture several horned toads (called horny toads before the modern connotation of "horny") with a large one for the father, a shorter one for mother and several small ones for the children. I cut out little coats for them from cloth and then walk them around on their little hind legs and carry on conversations for them. I'm very careful not to hurt them and as soon as I am done, I take them back to where I found them and turn them loose. I learn at an early age that there is always something interesting to explore and learn, even when school is not in session. I never experience loneliness until we move to towns where I am among many people.

My favorite friend is a white rabbit with pink eyes that follows me around like a dog. I love to pet his soft fur and hug him and chat with him. One hot day I find him under a sagebrush not far from the house. Blood is running from his nose and his ears are drooped. He does not move even when I run to him and pet him

and try to get him up. Sobbing, I run to Mother and beg her to help him, but she just shakes her head and continues whatever she is doing. She just says that sometimes this happens with rabbits and she doesn't even come with me to help me bear the pain of what is a terrible tragedy for me and my friend. The rest of this story is blocked out of my memory, probably because it is so sad. Sorrow cannot be measured by one's age or the event that causes it. I learn that there are things one must bear alone, and one cannot always count on help or comfort from those we expect consolation. I learn that I can survive such things, even though the wounds may never completely heal, but I can never accept the death of animals as unimportant.

When my father dies I am only five years old and I don't understand what has happened at all. I see him in the hospital, delirious, tossing in pain, though he recognizes me when I am put on the bed beside him. He pats me and says, "Has my little dolly come to see me?" My next snapshot is of sitting beside a group of cousins who are playing games. I just watch while the adults go to "the funeral." I don't understand anything except that my father is no longer with us and we are desolated. Later I ask my mother what it means to die and she says that your heart just stops beating. I become worried about my own heart and will take off running whenever I think of it just to be able to feel it beating. Even today I can't sleep in a position where I can hear my heart. Again, I survive these things alone, and eventually the universe brings answers to most of my questions. I am in the process of learning faith and patience.



*Best Animal Friend*



*Esther and a Reluctant Playmate*

These are a few of the pictures in the album of my early life. Usually they appear automatically, but sometimes a nagging reminder causes me to flip the pages back and forth until I find the one appropriate to my need at the time. Sometimes I wonder what I have sealed away, and the reasons for doing that. I have some that I look at frequently. It is interesting that almost all of them are visual only. It takes special effort to bring out the sounds of summer, such as bird calls, music played on the old wind-up Victrola, or my mother and sister harmonizing as they wash the dishes. Some of these songs are from the Civil War days, handed down by my musical Welsh grandparents. So many things are woven into the living being that I am. Will all these be erased when I die, or will I carry them on to experiences on another plane of existence? I know that some have been woven into the fabric of other people. We are an interesting collage, we humans, as infinite as the universe we are just learning to explore and define. Perhaps the best place to start is with our childhood memories.

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