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**YOUTH POETRY – 1<sup>st</sup> PLACE**

**I Know What She Dreamed**

by Madeline Colarossi

Marie sits with one nurse at an empty table.

The uniformed woman with the clothes pin smile holds out a forkful of eggs and tells her to "open up."

Marie doesn't listen. She makes a frustrated barking sound, the only noise she can make anymore.

I pick up a plate to the old woman's left.

I know what Marie wants.

She wants crisp bacon.

She wants eggs that come from a hen house, not from a refrigerated carton.

She wants toast that isn't black and crumbling on one side.

I shake my head.

I know what she wants.

She wants to go home.

But she will never go home.

The nurse is gone now.

Marie sits in her wheelchair, staring across the room, hands held up near her chest, eyes wide.

I move closer to her, scrubbing her tabletop, moving around her.

Her eyes are far away and her lips smile.

Then, she looks at me.

She is daydreaming, I decided. But how can that be?

What does a woman of such an age have left to dream about?

And so I ask her, "Marie, what do you dream about?"

She looks at me with her serious blue eyes, and her hands start to shake.

"It's just a tremor," someone says. "Just age."

I don't believe it.

Her hands shake with longing.

They shake with longing to answer me.

Marie wants me to know what she is dreaming.

With her shaking and her eyes, she tries to say

What her voice no longer can.

I know the secrets that no one else does.

Because now I know what elderly, voiceless people dream about.

If she could speak, she would tell me to stop wasting time.

She would make sure I did all I could to make a better future for myself.

She would be certain that I never made the same mistakes she did when she was young.

She would tell me to run and never come back to this place again.

Next time, they might not ever let me leave.

She does not want me to be stuck here like her.

I have too much life to live.

Every day, I walk away with those eyes following me, those words burning into me, forming a tremble in my soul from the shaking of her hands.

It is a custom now.

I bring her slimy bacon, scrambled eggs from a carton, and burnt toast.  
Marie tells me what she dreams.  
She dreams of going home.

Today, it is different.  
I go over to the table and the nurse looks up at me.  
Marie smiles at me, eyes sparkling and points across the room.  
There is something there she wants me to see.  
I look, but nothing is there.  
There never is. That corner table is always empty.  
"She's hallucinating," the nurse tells me. "There's nothing there, Marie."  
I look down at Marie and study her eyes.  
The nurse is wrong.  
Marie sees what none of us can see.  
She sees the celestials.  
She hears them calling to her, "Just hold on a little longer."

Two hours later I hand in my cards and sign the paper.  
My contract is terminated.  
I will not be back here again.  
As I walk down the hall, past the dining room, I peak inside.  
Marie is still there with the clothes pin nurse, pointing, trying to convince us all that something is there in the corner.  
She barks and points.  
"Good bye, Marie," I whisper.

Tomorrow, I will go home.  
My father will come to me with the Sterling newspaper.  
He will point to obituaries and tell me, "An old lady from the Manor died last night.  
Did you know her?"  
I will look out the kitchen window.  
Then I will say, "Yes.  
I knew what she dreamed."

## **ADULT POETRY—1<sup>st</sup> PLACE**

### **Hardened Hearts**

by Dawn Wolf

Piercing arrows target her  
Coming from the four winds  
She stands firm in the midst.  
Inner sanctuary holds convictions strong  
Provoke the spirit of wrath.  
They conjure up their armies and  
With halfwits they attack.  
Her head raised high  
Arms extend to Father Sky.  
Her prayers give birth on a bridge to glory.  
Small rumblings from aggressors  
Roll off her back.  
She feels bathed in disdain from the warriors.  
The Sun is her friend of comfort.  
Sun begins evaporation of hardened judgment aimed upon her.  
She prevails with Red Pride.  
This she chronicles the saga told  
With the rhythm of pounding drums.

## YOUTH FICTION – 1<sup>st</sup> PLACE

### The Mysterious Case Of Edward Kingsley

by Hunter Hill

Once upon a time, there was a town just up a hill from a small creek. At the very top of the hill lived a wealthy man by the name of Edward Kingsley. Edward was a tall, slender fellow with a charming face, long hair, and a goatee. Many of the women tried to marry Edward, but he was not interested in any of them for they did not care about who he was but only cared for his looks and wealth.

One morning he ventured down the hill to the creek to get his water for the day. As he reached the creek, he saw a young woman across the creek. He had never seen this woman before, but she was the most beautiful lady he had ever seen. He crossed the creek and greeted himself.

"Hello Madam, my name is Edward Kingsley. I live just up the hill in Fairburrow."

"Nice to meet you," she replied.

"May I ask what your name is my dear?" said Edward curiously.

"My name is Jolene Nichols. I also live on the hill, and I know you, and I know what you are after! You wish to take my hand in marriage, but I shall refuse!"

Edward was in shock. "But why? Why would you not want to marry me?" he asked.

"I don't want a man of wealth, and I don't need a man of physical beauty. I want a man of mental beauty," she said confidently.

Jolene took her water and headed up the hill to her house.

"How absurd! Why wouldn't a woman want to marry a man like me?" he thought to himself.

Suddenly, he realized she was just like him! He went back to his mansion. As night fell, he crawled into bed and thought and thought and thought the entire night.

"I know I love her, but how do I get her to love me back?"

The next morning, Edward went back to the creek. While fetching his water, a lowly turtle stepped out of the creek. Edward picked it up and began to speak to it.

"If only you were a magic fish like the one from my favorite story so you could grant my wish!" he sighed.

Suddenly, the turtle spoke!

"Well, my dear man, I guess today is your lucky day, for you see, I am a magic turtle, and I can grant your wish!"

Edward almost dropped the turtle in shock! He quickly realized it was actually happening. He sat and thought.

"I could just wish for her to love me! But then again, it wouldn't be real. She said she didn't want a man like me so..."

Edward thought hard for a moment, then it hit him!

"I could change my looks!"

He looked at the turtle and shouted with joy, "I wish that I was a regular man!"

Suddenly he grew shorter and his face became rather dull. Edward knew that if he returned to his mansion the guards wouldn't recognize him and wouldn't let him in, so he no longer had wealth or beauty. The very next day, he saw Jolene in the town square and acted like a true gentleman. She instantly knew that she loved this man and after a few short months, they got married!

While this was going on the town guards were investigating the mysterious disappearance of Edward Kingsley. During the dance at the wedding the guards broke in and declared that this man, the husband, was a murderer. Because the day he arrived was also the day of Edward's disappearance. The guards saw Edward going to the creek but he never came back. Instead this mysterious stranger arrived and he was wearing Edward's clothes. The husband tried to explain himself but as soon as he opened his mouth an arrow shot through the air and found its mark right in between his eyes. He instantly collapsed to the ground and died.

"Huh," awoke the man in a panic, "it was only a dream!"

He looked around and found his wife lying happily beside him. He laid back into his bed when suddenly the walls began shaking and the world started crumbling under his feet. Then there was darkness. He saw nothing and he heard nothing. It felt like he had been wondering for days in this silent realm of black when finally a voice shot through the thick air like a bullet.

"Edward! Edward! Listen to me! You need to calm down!" the voice shouted

The world flashed to light. As his eyes adjusted he began looking around. He was in a room with pads on the walls. On the floor beside him was a man with a sharpened stick driven straight through his forehead right in between his eyes. He was dead.

"But the people! My, my wife was there...Jolene! The town...all the people!" shouted Edward.

"Those people don't exist Edward, they never have!" yelled a man in a white lab coat.

"But my wife was there!" screamed Edward as tears flowed down his eyes.

The doctor retaliated "Edward, you murdered your wife! This is a mental institution for the criminally insane! None of these places and none of those people have ever existed!"

## **ADULT FICTION – 1<sup>st</sup> PLACE**

### **A Measure Of Time**

by Keith Schlaegel

It wasn't just that the bullet had torn off a chunk of his ear. That was bad, but what made Ed truly upset was the stream of blood that had run down onto his new shirt.

"Now that's damn unlucky," he said, holding a corner of the sack he found in the chicken coop against his ear, hoping to stop the flow of blood. Ed pulled the sack away for a moment, then reached with his other hand, touching nothing where the ear lobe had been.

The man walked out of the coop and headed across the barnyard to the car setting in the driveway. He got in, turned the key and nodded his head when the motor caught. The car rolled out the driveway and onto the gravel road.

Ed looked into the rear view mirror and shook his head. "Now that's hell of a thing," he muttered. The drive to the doctor would take maybe an hour, but Ed hoped that the little store that was in Hamilton's elevator would have some medical supplies so he could stop the blood.

The outline of the elevator appeared in the distance and Ed tromped down on the foot pedal as he felt the blood run down his forearm. A few minutes later, Ed pulled into the empty parking lot of the grain elevator and a minute later he was in the office.

"Anyone here?" Ed shouted as he scanned the walls of the office looking at canned beans, coffee and salmon and a variety of tobacco products. He saw nothing that remotely looked like it could staunch the flow of blood from a mangled ear.

"Hey Ed."

Ed turned around to see Emmett Hamilton standing in the doorway that led to the back door of the office. "I was outside sweeping the dump area. Watch ya need?" Emmett said.

Ed pulled the sack off his ear, saying nothing.

"Jeezel Peezel, that looks bad Ed. How'd you do that?"

"Had an accident. Rat did it."

Emmett walked closer to get a better look. "A rat bit you? Looks like it was a big one."

"No, a rat didn't bite me. A bullet took off a piece of my ear, but the rat caused it."

Emmett stared at Ed, masking pity, then nodded and walked into a back room. A minute later he came back with a relatively clean piece of white cloth, a bottle of iodine and adhesive tape. He pointed at a chair and Ed sat down.

"I'm thinking this is pretty nasty. You better go see a doctor. If you want, I can drive you to see Doc McNally."

"No, I don't believe I want to see a doctor."

Emmett daubed at the bloody ear, making a face as he tried to stop the bleeding. "I think you should. If nothing else, it might get infected and then you'd have a hell of a mess."

"Far as I know the bullet was clean. Shouldn't be any infection, though that would be the way my luck runs."

Emmett Hamilton shrugged and tried to dab some iodine on the wound, but then gave up and poured a small amount on it.

"Let me see if I can tape this cloth to your head and then you best go see the doctor. I'm thinking you might bleed to death if you don't. How'd you get shot with a bullet anyhow, Ed?"

Ed glared at Emmett. "I ain't goin' to no doctor and you'e being nosy...I kind of shot myself." He glared at Emmett for a moment longer. "There's been rats bothering my chickens lately and I went in there with my .22. I seen one and took a shot at it. Bullet must of hit a nail head in one of the timbers and bounced back at me. Took part of my ear clean off."

Emmett nodded. "I can see it did. Did you get the rat?"

"No, no I didn't. Outside of getting blood on my new shirt, that's what irritates me most about the whole thing."

A couple of minutes later he finished taping the cloth to Ed's head and then sat back to admire his handiwork.

"I guess that'll hold, but I ain't makin' no promises. How you feelin'? You're looking a little pale."

Ed shook his head and didn't answer. Emmett sat, watching him for a few seconds, then stood up and walked behind the counter. He shuffled some papers, moved a couple of ledgers, and then looked back at Ed.

"You okay, Ed? Maybe I ought to load you up and take you to Doc McNally. I don't want you dying here in the office."

Ed continued staring ahead, then looked up at Emmett. "How's the war going?"

Emmett stared at Ed for a moment, then softly asked, "What do you mean Ed? How's it goin'?"

Ed shrugged. "I guess I mean, how's it going? Are we winning? Boy's still dying over there?"

Emmett swallowed deeply. "Yeah, I guess you didn't hear. They dropped a bomb. Couple of them. Japs surrendered?"

Ed stared at Emmett, his mouth open. "They dropped two bombs and the Japs surrendered? I don't understand. When did they give up?"

"Oh, what is today? Think it was last week." Emmett looked at a calendar on the wall. "Yeah, 14th or 15th I guess."

Emmett looked from the calendar to Ed. He was still staring at him, his eyes blank, reminding him of pictures he had seen of sharks.

"Come on Ed, I'm taking you to the doc's. Let me get my keys."

Ed dropped his gaze to the floor. "We dropped two bombs and they surrendered. When did they drop the bombs?"

"First part of August, I guess somewhere in the first week. Dropped one, then the other, from what I heard it completely destroyed the cities in Japan. Hard to imagine, ain't it?"

Emmett could see the cloth starting to turn red. He cleared his throat and started to speak.

"My boy's dead, Emmett. Never did find the body." Ed looked up from the floor and set his gaze on Emmett.

Emmett cleared his throat again. "I heard some- thing about that Ed. I'm really sorry."

"Yes...yes, he was on board a ship called the Indianapolis. It got hit with a torpedo and now he's dead. I don't even get to bury him."

Emmett coughed. "I'm going to go get my keys. You're going to the doctor."

Ed looked at Emmett. "Yeah...yeah, that's probably a good idea. I don't feel so good. My mind ain't too clear." His gaze dropped to the floor again. "You know, if they'd dropped those big bombs two weeks ago, George might be alive. The Japs wouldn't been torpedoing no ships and he'd be alive."

"I'm sorry Ed."

"I told him not to join the Navy. Told him you couldn't hide on no boat." The man raised his hand next to the cloth on his head, paused, then lowered it. "Two bombs. Ain't that a hell of a thing? They'd dropped them a couple weeks ago, George would be alive. He'd be alive and things wouldn't be so damn awful."

The light in the office of the grain elevator was turning gray as the late afternoon sun rays were blocked by a lone locust tree that was next to the scales. The two men looked at each other and then the man with a cloth taped to his head nodded at the other. The other man disappeared into the back room, leaving the man alone.

A solitary figure, hunched over, shoulders shaking in the dying light.

## Teaching Shakespeare

by Madeline Colarossi

In high school, it's plain to most that the average student does not care about Shakespeare. I am certain that the students in this class are asking themselves, "Why do I need to read Shakespeare? Shakespeare is ancient, and there's nothing he has to say that could possibly hold any meaning in my life." I would disagree. *Although we do not live in the same world as Shakespeare, he wrote about many topics that are still meaningful in today's society. I hope to explain the purpose of studying his works to you by pointing out examples from different texts of Shakespeare's various plays, taking into account several different themes.*

The first theme is one that all of mankind struggles with, revenge. Revenge is something every human being has in common. Even a toddler knows how to get revenge on someone. In daily life, you as a high school senior, know how to do the same. Every day, I see people taking revenge on each other, even in small "friendly" ways. If someone steals your soda and takes a drink off of it in the lunch room, then you might reach over and steal their cookie. This is one of the most common, but childish (and not life threatening) forms of vengeance. When people do "wrong" to us, we automatically want to get back, even if it's in a small way. The characters in Shakespeare's works are no different.

There are several examples of statements of revenge from different plays that he wrote. The first one is from *Merchant of Venice*. The speaker is a character named Shylock who is under persecution and wishes for revenge against another character.

Shylock says, "I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die?"

In this paragraph Shylock is standing up for his own humanity, making himself effectively "equal" to any other man. Then he says, "And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

In this play, we can see that the character is struggling to gain that which he calls a simple human right, revenge.

Similarly, a character named Hamlet in the play *Hamlet* claims, "Revenge should have no bounds." Hamlet is striving after, like Shylock, something that is considered a cultural norm. It was normal in those days to seek out revenge, whether in small (seeking payment in some form) or in large (taking someone else's life).

Today, we do the same. Throughout our day, we might not kill someone to get revenge like Shylock (attempted) or Hamlet. However, if we do not seek after vengeance, what is the point of the court system? The whole point of having a court where people are taken and tried for murder, rape, vandalism, or even just parking in the wrong place, is to get revenge. Therefore, if this theme of revenge that appears in Shakespeare's play is representative of the problems within his social circle and ours, maybe it suggests that times have not changed quite as much as one would think.

The next theme I want to cover is loyalty. As a rule, we all hold in our hearts a feeling of loyalty toward someone. We all have one person (at least) to whom we feel completely loyal. When asked to show our loyalty to them, we might stand up for a sibling in front of someone else to protect them, or we might even choose to allow a friend to cheat off their test during an exam. These are forms of loyalty, one good and the other bad. Loyalty can extend to family members, coworkers, friends, and many other realms of society. For many of us, that person is a family member. This is the case in Shakespeare's play, *King Lear*.

There are two characters in *King Lear* who are extremely loyal to the people that they love. One of them is the princess, Cordilia. The other is a character named Edgar. During the course of the play, Edgar's father is blinded by having his eyes stabbed out for standing up to protect the king. For his loyalty to the king, this man was sent out among the beggars and the crazy people to die. It was there that his son, Edgar, found him. Edgar was pretending to be someone crazy because his father had threatened to kill him. Though he knew that he could be killed if his father realized it was

he, Edgar chose to care for his father. He guided his father around during a storm and cared for him, he even kept his father from committing suicide.

Another example of loyalty from the play *King Lear* is that of Cordilia, a princess. The king at the time was a very proud man, who wanted all to speak very highly of him. In essence, he liked to have people puff up his ego. Now, this king had three daughters. Two of them consistently showered him with praise. In turn, he rewarded them with many gifts, even parts of his country. Cordilia, on the other hand, did not treat him the way that her sisters did. This angered the king and he asked her why she didn't treat him the way he wanted to be treated. In answer to his question Cordilia told him,

"Good my lord,  
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I  
Return those duties back as are right fit,  
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.  
Why have my sisters' husbands, if they say  
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,  
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry  
Half my love with him, half my care and duty;  
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,  
To love my father all."

Here, Cordilia is showing him the highest forms of loyalty. She is telling him that she has dedicated herself to loving him and giving him honor. She is saying that if her sisters loved him as much as she did, they would not have married other men. The king, oddly, is deeply angered by her proclamation and sends her away. At the end of the play, this man who sent her away falls to her mercy as a mad man, and Cordilia chooses to keep loving him and caring for him up until her death.

Shakespeare showed us through these characters that loyalty (especially within the family circle) was something that was important to him. It is also important to us. You might allow another to cheat off of your test, but if you turn them in later, the cheater will be angry and feel that you have betrayed them. Betrayal is in itself disloyalty. Therefore, loyalty is something that both in Shakespeare's world and ours, is considered very important to society's function and to relationships as a whole.

The third themes that I will offer to you are that of greed and jealousy. Jealousy is something that we all face on a moment to moment basis. For example, say two students studied equally hard, hoping to get an A on an exam in this class. Then, say that one of these students gets an A and the other student gets a B. Since they both studied equally hard and one got the favorable result and the other did not, the student with the B grade will be jealous of the students with the A grade.

In Shakespeare's writings and plays, the theme of greed and jealousy is a widely placed one, popping up in almost all of his pieces. He makes reference to it most often in the plays, *Hamlet*, *Henry V*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Each of these plays is filled with characters seeking vengeance. What is at the root of vengeance? Greed. What is at the root of greed? Jealousy.

To show some examples of sections from the plays where different characters speak about feelings of jealousy or greed, I will start off with some famous lines from *Hamlet*.

"To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,  
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss:  
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,  
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt."

Hamlet makes certain to tell us that he knows it is wrong to be jealous. However, he also knows that he is jealous and it is a sickness in his soul. He is right. That is what jealousy and greed are like. Even today, it is a sickness to us. In *Henry V*, this is enunciated by the claim made by Richard when he says, "O, how has thou with jealousy infected the sweetness of affiancement!" Richard compares jealousy to an infection, mirroring Hamlet's view of a disease.

Another play where jealousy is mentioned is *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In this play, there are many fairies. Two fairies, Oberon and Titania do not get along. Oberon cares for Titania, but she does not return his feelings. Instead, Titania loves a human. However, this human loves another human. Therefore, the two of them begin to meddle in the lives of those humans. The lines below are from this play:

**Oberon:** How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,  
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,  
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

Didst not thou lead him through the glimmering night  
From Perigouna, whom he ravished?  
And make him with fair Aegles break his faith,  
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

**Titania:** These are the forgeries of jealousy.

The picture presented of jealousy is not a pretty one. It is a disease and an infection to mankind, though it can come about from something as innocent and pure as love. Today, it is the same. If a person was to steal someone we love away from us, we will be jealous. Jealousy, in turn, causes us to do things that we would not normally do, leading our discussion back to the themes of vengeance and loyalty. No, one might not kill someone to get what they want as is common in Shakespeare's plays, but we still act jealous, greedy, loyal or disloyal, and vengeful in our own way.

It is my hope that through this paper you as a student can see that though we are not living during Shakespeare's day and age, his works because of their themes (and other aspects) still hold much relevancy to our lives today. We and the people around us will continue throughout the age to struggle with feelings and actions of revenge, loyalty, greed, and jealousy. By reading Shakespeare's work, we can see that time has not changed as much as we believe. We can see that people still live, in a sense, the same lives with the same struggles. Even in Shakespeare's time (and writing) there were people like us with wisdom to share. This offering of wisdom is one of the many reasons we should continue to read Shakespeare's work and why it should remain important for you as a high school student, learning life skills to survive in today's world.

## **ADULT ESSAY – 1st PLACE**

### **What About The Fourth Estate?**

by Suzanne Waring

In his book, *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, Thomas Carlyle quoted Edmund Burke who may have been the first to use the term, "Fourth Estate." During a parliamentary debate in 1787, Burke reminded members of what was considered the three estates of the English Parliament, but he also drew attention to the reporters' gallery. Burke pointed out the importance of reporters by saying they were the most important of all and called them the Fourth Estate. From that time forward, the term, the Fourth Estate, was used to identify the press.

The Fourth Estate has had a great impact on the events of our nation as well as other nations. Preceding the American Revolution, Thomas Paine was successful in gaining sentiment for the revolutionaries' point of view when he wrote *Common Sense*, challenging the king and the British government. The Fourth Estate also played an important role in the French Revolution. Journalists have been reporting the inner workings of government, business, and community life at least since the 18th Century, and these in-depth reports have played an essential role in maintaining free societies.

For the most part, journalists, as neutral bystanders, have done this by taking what was murky and doing their best to seek out the sequence of events, to determine the players involved, and to report the truth. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, young reporters at the *Washington Post* in the 1970s, are outstanding examples of those who were able to sleuth out the truth. They exposed the planners of the Watergate robbery and other misdeeds. They were able to define President Richard Nixon's involvement so clearly that he was forced to resign.

For many years, journalism has been touted as a career field for young people coming out of college. Dreaming of seeing their byline, many looked to Woodward and Bernstein as their inspiration.

In my own community of less than 60,000, a newspaper reporter did a series that exposed alcoholism for the persistent problem that it is. He received the Pulitzer Prize for this work. Whenever a public entity attempts to hold a closed-door meeting, it's the newspaper that files a complaint.

Undeniably, newspaper reporting has served an important role in our society; however, several sociological events have occurred changing the newspaper industry. First people became addicted to news on television with pictures that were easier to perceive and captions that were short enough to

remember. Exclusive news channels where anchors repeated the news captions over and over became popular. Captions also ran along the bottom of television screens. People began thinking that these pictures and captions gave them the whole story of each event.

Next came the news on computers and smart phones. With Internet news sites, the number of pictures was reduced, and the captions were short. Because people were busy with their jobs, families, and hobbies, they didn't realize that they were learning less about current events and the inner workings of government. Something important was disappearing from their lives.

In 1935, E. B. White wrote a satirical essay titled "Irtnog" that was published in the *New Yorker*. In it he pointed out that people were using short cuts in their reading. The first short-cut magazine, *Reader's Digest*, selected and condensed information so that people didn't have to spend much time hunting for key articles and then reading them. With tongue in cheek, White wrote that a few years after the introduction of the *Reader's Digest*, the number of short-cut digests had increased to 173 on a variety of topics. Staying in that satirical mode, he went on to say that these digests soon weren't condensed enough and that some ingenious person took on digesting everything that happened in a day into one word. The first day the word was "Irtnog." Like the captions on television and news over computers, White said "Irtnog" gave readers the satisfaction that they had complete coverage of the day's news.

In all seriousness what does the general public lose when news reporting is reduced to something like "Irtnog"? Several years ago Faisal al-Kasim, a news specialist in one of the more democratic Arab countries of Qatar, was asked by the *Atlantic Monthly* what he thought about the American soldiers' abusive measures at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. His response was that most countries cover up their atrocities as Iraq had covered up what was happening in its own prisons, but America revealed most everything to the world—in detail. Americans have sometimes been embarrassed by the disappointing actions of their countrymen, but at least these actions have been exposed. When the fourth estate is robust, citizens learn of atrocities, and usually those problems get corrected and the perpetrators are punished.

With the general public shifting away from reading newspapers to getting news through a website or on television, the newspaper industry has felt the pinch. For sure, people quit subscribing. According to the "State of the News Media 2012," from 2003 to 2011, circulation dropped 40 percent. When that happened, businesses spent less of their advertising budgets with newspapers. Print advertising revenue fell from \$46 million to \$24 million during that period, reducing newspapers' ability to pay for staff. A report by the American Society of News Editors showed that the U.S. newsroom workforce has shrunk 30 percent since 2003, and reporters working in statehouses declined 35 percent. The report goes on to indicate that this year [2014] Kansas has only eight full-time journalists reporting to 2.8 million people on state government. The fourth estate is disappearing. Fewer watchdogs are watching.

My friends tell me that I am a Pollyanna if I think the general public will see that newspapers are in trouble and correct the problem by again subscribing to daily and weekly newspapers. They say that under a capitalistic economy, companies go out of business whenever their products or services are no longer purchased. Since the newspaper industry is not—and should not be—publicly funded, it is no exception. Okay, I understand that, but what I want to know is this: What element in our society is going to step up and fulfill the watchdog role by sleuthing out the truth and reporting it? Burke was saying that the press was essential. Tell me: who or what is going to perpetuate the role of the Fourth Estate?

## **ADULT AUTOBIOGRAPHY – 1st PLACE**

### **The Trip Of A Lifetime**

by Janice O. Mcintosh

It was about 10:00 p.m. one warm May evening and my two dachshunds Mickey and Maggie, were reminding me it was almost time to go to bed. I was tired because I had gone through two surgeries for breast cancer and now I was undergoing radiation treatment. The phone began to ring and my first thought was: Who would be calling so late?

I picked up the phone and heard a familiar voice. It was my son Andrew calling from Austin, Texas. It was always nice to hear from one of my three children.

"Hi Mom. How are you doing?"

"Pretty good." I replied. "How about you?"

"I'm fine and I have a wonderful idea. What about taking a trip to Norway?"

"Sounds like a wonderful idea, but I have two more weeks of radiation to finish, it would cost a lot, and I'm not brave enough to travel alone." I answered wistfully.

Andrew had thought everything out. "You'll soon finish radiation, you can rest a few weeks and then you'll be fine. You won't have to go alone because I can get vacation time so I can go with you. As far as cost is concerned, a friend of mine works for a travel agency and she can get cheap tickets. She'll give us frequent flyer miles so we only have to split food and motels, so it's not going to cost that much. Besides, all your life you've wanted to go to Norway and this will be a great chance!"

There were tears in my eyes. My voice was husky as I told Andrew excitedly, "Oh, I'd love to go. Let's do it!"

Three weeks later, we met in the Kansas City airport and flew to Newark. We boarded a huge SAS plane and soon we were on our way to Oslo. It really was a dream come true!

I had researched my Norwegian family earlier and found that my paternal great-grandfather had once lived on a farm called Oybakken northwest of Oslo, near a town called Dokka, which was close to Lillehammer where the 1994 Olympics had recently been held.

There were cousins of ours named Arne and Tobba Woxen who now lived on the farm. I wrote to Tobba and got a nice letter in return to tell me they would meet us at the bus station in Dokka on the day we arrived. They hoped we would stay with them for a few days.

We had flown all night and were weary when we arrived, but adrenaline kicked in and words couldn't express my excitement. Andrew was thrilled as well but he was much quieter in his enthusiasm.

As the bus pulled in to the Dokka station, I watched out of the window eagerly to see if I could see Tobba. There was a pretty blond middle-age lady standing there waiting with a big smile on her face. It was indeed Tobba!

As we got off the bus, she held out her arms and embraced each of us warmly. Her eyes were a beautiful blue and she had a sweet slightly mischievous smile on her face, much like my Dad's. Little did I realize at that point that she was not only my cousin, but would also become my lifelong friend.

There was no lack of conversation as we got in her car and started driving. There were majestic pine trees as far as one could see and the road was winding. Suddenly, Tobba made a right turn and we started up a hill. At the top was the most stately three-story house I had ever seen! It really took my breath away as I tried to wonder what life had been like for my great-grandfather as I mentally tried to record its picturesque beauty in my mind forever.

As we got out of the car, Tobba explained the farm had been named Oybakken, which means "Lonely or Isolated Hill." The farm acquired its name after the Black Plague swept through Norway, when most of the farm's neighbors had died in the epidemic. The farm traces its origin back to 1552. Its rich history is fascinating, but that story is for another day.

We walked into a lovely foyer. It had a beautifully painted trunk as the main focal point. Beyond the foyer was a gorgeous winding staircase leading to the second floor.

Tobba led us through a big wooden door into her homey blue and white decorated kitchen. It had a huge white cement fireplace in one corner with dried hanging flowers. Beautiful copper utensils were placed on the fireplace shelves. There was a long pine table with matching benches on either side of the fireplace and lovely pine shelves decorated with a white lace edging that held pretty family china and wooden pieces.

Pretty soon, a slender little lady with light brown hair came into the kitchen. It was Tobba's Mother Magnhild, and she could have been my grand- mother's identical twin!

How amazing to think these two cousins who lived 5000 miles apart could look so much alike, and as I grew to know this lovely lady over the next few days, her personality was similar to my grandmother as well.

Tobba and Magnhild fixed a delicious lunch and we ate out on their second-story porch where you could see the beauty of Norway for miles. We were joined by Kari, an American Airlines flight attendant who lived nearby and came over to help with the language translation. The time flew by as we drank iced tea and absorbed the scenic view below us.

Late that afternoon, Tobba's brother Svein arrived from Grua, which is near Oslo. He was a high school teacher and counselor. Svein was very friendly just like the other members of the family and made us feel right at home.

Tobba fixed a wonderful beef roast, mashed potatoes and gravy, a lettuce salad, and hot rolls. Tobba's husband Arne joined us, a tall blond Norwegian with an easy smile and a friendly manner. It

is the custom in Norway that after dinner you moved to the living room where later you will have dessert.

It wasn't long until Tobba's two sisters, Marit and Herborg, and their husbands Kjell Arne and Arvid arrived. Some of their children came along too. We spent a wonderful evening, visiting and getting acquainted with our new cousins.

About 8:00 p.m. Tobba came in with a beautiful cake with fluffy white frosting and decorated with an exquisite design made with fresh strawberries, blueberries, and kiwi. There were two other cakes as well. One was chocolate with "Welcome Cousins" written in white icing. The other cake was yellow with strawberry frosting and fresh strawberries on top. There were also dishes of candy and nuts, fresh flowers, and twinkling candles. Andrew and I were so flattered by this special celebration.

The next two days flew by with lots of conversation and lots of sightseeing, including going up to Overlier where several cousins have a second home. It is a beautiful place high in the mountains. The families enjoy this place year around and share birthday celebrations, picnics, parties, and skiing in the winter. We also went to two very old sister churches built side by side. They were built by two sisters who couldn't agree on a church plan so they each built one according to the plan she liked best! It was quite a remarkable achievement for two women seven hundred years ago!

One of my favorite places was St. Olaf's well. Olaf often rode through the area as he converted the people to Christianity. He was later canonized a saint. Folklore says if you drink water from this well, you will have a healthy life. We each took a bottle of well water home!

All too soon, our visit ended. It was here that we gathered for a final meal together, our bags packed and waiting by the door. Svein would take us back to the airport in Oslo.

Tobba fried bacon and scrambled eggs laid by some of the 4,000 chickens raised on their farm. She told me that, twice a week, a truck comes from Oslo and picks up the eggs from a refrigerated room in their ultra modern chicken house and takes them to sell in Oslo grocery stores.

There were also two kinds of sausage, three kinds of cheese, orange juice, toast and biscuits with her delicious strawberry-blueberry jam. Needless to say, there was lots of steaming black "Norwegian coffee" and Arne or Tobba filled our cups many times.

Magnhild came down from her upstairs apartment to join us. Their oldest son, Tor Vegard drove over from his home nearby. He helped Arne a great deal with all of his farm work. Tor Vegard was a pleasant young man in his thirties with a big smile and a cheerful disposition.

There was a lull in the conversation and Tobba cleared her throat and said "I have something to share with you, Janice and Andrew. I've waited until this morning until I felt I knew you well. She went on: " When your letter from Kansas arrived telling us that you would like to come and visit Oybakken because it had been the boyhood home of Gilbert Nelson, Janice's great-grandfather, I was puzzled and thought you were mixed with another family. As soon as I finished the letter, I put on my jacket and drove up to our historical museum and library. I told the director there must be some mistake, because there was not a Gilbert in our family.

"The librarian walked over to a shelf of books of early Norwegian families in the area. He soon pulled out a tattered, frayed book and began to look through it. All of a sudden, he exclaimed: 'Tobba! this letter is correct. There was a Gilbert and his older brother Hans in the Oybakken family! According to this account, they were asked to leave Norway or face jail time due to a labor uprising led by Marcus Thrane. So they left in 1865 and settled in Bennington, Kansas. Hans was a carpenter and Gilbert was a farm hand.'

"Apparently, the family never spoke of them again."

Now it was our turn to be surprised! I had no idea my great-grandfather and his brother Hans were asked to leave Norway by the government! They never talked about it here in America. All I had heard was that Gilbert was very bitter toward Norway.

All of a sudden, I remembered a story my grandmother (Gilbert's daughter) once told me. She said she had a relative who came to America as a stowaway on a ship, but she never said who it was. I now suspect it was Gilbert. I repeated her story to my Dad and he said: "I am surprised. I never heard that story."

There was total silence around the breakfast table as we were all engrossed in our own thoughts.

After a few minutes, Tor Vegard spoke: "Janice and Andrew, welcome to the Oybakken family! We look forward to getting to know Gilbert's family even better in the coming years!"

In the last several years I've returned to Oybakken five times. Ten of our Oybakken cousins have been to visit us.

Andrew truly encouraged me to "take the trip of a lifetime with him."