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Youth Poetry–First Place

Imagination Highway

by Penelope Duran, Houston TX

Cruising along I-10 W, as we do every year,
Boundless hours in the car, I often fear,
Traffic's bad; or is it? Who am I to say?
Couldn't it be far worse, anyway?
Sun burns my skin as I lean against the window,
Is it too much to ask for a pillow?
Should've brought some entertainment,
Ignored by my family, lonely's an understatement,
I'm left with nothing except for the road,
I drift to sleep, as by boredom coaxed.
In my dream, boredom is not even a word,
The mere thought, something alien, absurd,
Wild adventures, me flying across the sky,
As the road beneath me flashes by,
Go where I want in a blink of an eye, with ease,
I visit other worlds and galaxies,
An experience words cannot give due,
I come to a world that's completely new,
Here also an I-10 W, like a wild roller coaster,
Like scenes from a book that keep getting bolder,
I'm about to fight a beast on top of a hill,
Awake on the driveway at grandma's in Kerrville,
I smile, and my brother asks why,
I say things are fun, when time flies by.

Adult Poetry–First Place

Miller

by Laura Prater, Victoria, KS

It was a trip to Missouri to fulfill a last request.
Every hilltop offering the color of leaves
Stretching across the windshield like a postcard.
Backroads resembling evening from treetops pitching shadows.
Familiar places were faded with quiet as I sat next to crying,
Memories being held unmolested by the present.
We pulled into the cemetery with purpose.
From an urn your ashes were scattered across two graves
Joining your parents in earth as in heaven.
The air was cool and I had traveled to your Autumn.

Youth Fiction

Oceans Apart but Never Parted

by Penelope Duran, Houston, TX

Tourists were everywhere in Portugal's bustling capital. Their voices carried through the steep and narrow alleys that formed the maze-like city. The buildings covered in blue and white tiles were unlike anything Earl had ever seen. There were shops at every corner and vendors selling cork bags and wooden roosters. He found himself nearly drowning in the commotion of it all. He usually found happiness in the quiet woods or by a peaceful lake and not at a tourist site. Yet he still liked it here. Despite seeming so very different from what he had known, Lisbon bore a strange familiarity, as if he had walked across these streets countless times.

Earl continued his journey to the tram stop and smiled at how the tram arrived just as he was approaching. So far buses and trams coming on time had been a rare thing. Yet at that particular moment there was no need for his patience to be tested. The acclaimed Tram 28 went up the hill-like streets at a slow pace which allowed Earl to

admire everything that passed his window. The tram grew more crowded with every stop, making the air become more musky, but he didn't mind.

He sighed as he finally arrived at the stop leading to St. George's Castle, perched atop the hill protectively overlooking the city. He slowly exited the tram's back door. Earl looked at the charming square with a majestic view of the harbor. The harbor perfectly mirrored the eccentric city and was wild and calm all at once, its waves glittering an electric blue hue. Earl spotted countless boats drifting across the water, among them a flotilla of fishing boats. He sighed as he felt nostalgia like a net around his heart.

"If only," he thought, "if only Opa were here."

Earl decided that it was time to move on. He made his way up to St. George's Castle. He went to the end of the line that snaked alongside the walls of the castle, reminiscent of the long lines in front of his favorite cinema. However, his new surroundings allowed time to pass more quickly. He looked at the stone arch above his head and questioned how old it was and whether it would ever fall. It was gargantuan and from the outside it seemed to go on for miles. Age had taken a toll on its walls with stones chipped, dirty and crumbling. Yet it still stood strong. Just like Opa had.

Earl was once again pulled back to reality as he realized he was at the front of the line. When buying his ticket he nearly found himself buying a second one for someone who wasn't there. Despite the veil of sadness that clouded his mind, he shook his head and put a smile on his face. After all he liked it here.

He strolled along the castle's uneven cobblestone path and heard odd cat-like noises coming from the trees that lined it. He looked up at the trees to find a dozen peacocks hidden among the branches. It was a peculiar sight. The kind one could only see once in a life time. If only he had someone with whom to share the moment. Sadly he could only find other tourists, many without a clue of what to do or where to go. Earl stepped over to the castle's outer wall which was now lined by silenced canons and looked out onto the clear blue harbor. Far below he saw fishermen sitting by the water's edge and he was reminded of his summers spent with Opa. He discovered he was muttering to himself, "How's the fishing?"

Earl was somewhat disheartened because Opa would never get to see this beautiful city. He knew that his grandfather would have liked it here. They would have enjoyed the seaside cuisine together, relishing the taste of sardines --Portugal's specialty. They would have journeyed to the other nearby cities together such as Cascais and Sintra. They would have admired the so-called "Mouth to Hell," which was beautiful despite its morbid name. Of course, they would have joined the fishermen there, even though the waters were too wild for any fish to come near. Naturally they would have both been here at the castle together looking at the sea. Unfortunately that was all wishful thinking.

Earl imagined seeing his reflection in the waters far below, seeing that he was no longer the little boy he once was but instead a young man whose face mirrored Opa's. He saw the reflection change again showing him as a gaunt sunburnt little boy and Opa beside him with one hand on Earl's shoulder. He smiled, for he could see that Opa would never truly be gone. For though they were oceans apart and separated by life and death, memories -- Opa's gift -- would forever connect them. He smiled and exited the castle on his way down to join the fishermen with Opa's voice echoing in his head, "*Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day.*" Earl once again gazed at the harbor that glittered like diamonds. Then he answered out loud, "Thank you, Opa. Because *When you Teach a Grandson to Fish ...*" and then Earl drifted into his memories.

Adult Essay

Codell Cyclone Days

by Nila LaRea Denton, Stockton, KS

Tornadoes raged through the Codell community on three separate occasions, but what is astonishing is the tornadoes all occurred on the same date, May 20, three years in a row - 1916, 1917 and 1918. Now, what are the odds of this happening? In Kansas, the odds of a tornado hitting the same township (36 square miles) is once every 50 years. The odds of a tornado hitting on the same date two years in a row is 1 in 10,000. The odds of on the same date, three years in a row is astronomical, and why Codell, Kansas is listed in "Ripley's Believe It or Not."

The following is a summary of just a few of the stories reported by local newspapers and eyewitness accounts:

On May 20, 1916, around 7 P.M., the first tornado, an F2 (means causing considerable damage) hit the ground three miles south of Codell and proceeded northeast for 15 miles, to about a mile northeast of Chalk Mound, located north of Laton, Kansas, located in Rooks County.

At Werner Overholser's place, everything was reported wrecked. The house torn to pieces except one room. Their washing machine and debris ended up with them in the cave (old fashioned term for cellar). A calf of theirs tied to a tree was found one half mile east, dropped unhurt in a wheat field.

A mile east of Codell, at Willis Johnson's farm after the storm, outbuildings were destroyed. Mr. Johnson was out tending to his chickens when the storm hit. He threw himself to the ground as the tornado damaged his farmstead all around him. The two story limestone house was left intact with his granddaughter Mary and her cousin, Agnes, trapped safe inside upstairs. Afterwards, chickens were found driven into treetrunks.

At the John Hoskins' place, the tornado took off the wrap around porch on the house. Also gone was the top of the smokehouse, with about 400 pounds of meat scattered, however a basket of eggs inside the smokehouse was left untouched. They found their auto 200 yards away. It was sticking upon the side of a tree with only the engine, front axle and radiator left on it.

After the cyclone (an old fashioned term for tornado), the Overholser boys killed 281 rats. One newspaper report said John Hoskins suffered the most damage - \$2500 worth.

Around 6 P.M. on May 20, 1917 a tornado rated F3 (means critical damage) touched down southwest of Codell, passing three miles west of town. The Plainville Times in an article reported more than one tornado was sighted.

At the Cochran Ranch located 12 miles southwest of Codell, the tornado took out several out buildings.

O. M. Loveland's farm, the only thing left was the cement silo. At the time, many believed the storm would find "no place to get ahold so the cement silos were seldom phased by cyclones." John Coleman's, a steer was later found dead, "speared with a 1 x 12." George Watkins - Four inches of rain accompanied the storm. Over two inches of hail fell, piling up 18" against the fence. Some reported hail goose egg size.

West of town, Evangelist Whiston, his wife and invalid nephew, Frank Fisher, camped at the Norris Grove. Water rose, threatening to carry away their temporary residence. Hail tore through the thin roof. Mrs. Whiston assisted Frank, heading to a nearby house one half mile away, sometimes wading in water nearly knee deep. Mr. Whiston had driven to Palco that morning to fill his regular appointment and was unaware of the storm until he reached Zurich on his return home after evening services.

When the Ora Dougherty family went to the cave (an old fashioned word for cellar), they took a few clothes, a ham and their marriage certificate. After the storm, when they came out, all they had left was what they took with them. But they did find the head of her sewing machine later.

The tornado hit other locations, including the city of Woodston where buildings were reported damaged along with the grandstand at the park and the lumberyard.

On May 20, 1918, people around Codell joked it was Codell's day for a storm. It was a cool day for May. Many wore extra clothes including coats while they worked outside. Having been told that storms usually formed on hot, sultry days helped lower in the anxiety level of locals that day.

The 1918 tornado, an F4 (mean severe damage, lives lost) started near Wakeeney. Near the the Ellis County line, it hit the Cochran Ranch damaged the year before. Buildings that had been rebuilt from the previous year's tornado were destroyed again. This time five people died, and three others seriously injured.

At about 8 P.M., the storm hit the town of Codell from the south, and the cyclone went right down through the business district. About 12 businesses were destroyed, including a bank, doctor's office, the hotel, a restaurant, implement dealer, lumber yard, the Studebaker dealership, retail stores, and harness shop

were destroyed. Most of these stores would not be rebuilt nor reopened. The Methodist and Pentecostal Churches also were taken, not rebuilt. The two year school building was totally destroyed. The new red brick school would later be built on the same location and today is used as a private residence.

At the hotel, Mrs. Haynes, along with her three children, and a traveling salesman, J. Glassman, were thrown from the hotel. Mr. Glassman found himself near a gate 100 yards away. One newspaper reported this incident as such, "The five inmates of the hotel, Mrs. Haynes and three children and one commercial man were carried in the air for quite a trip..."

North of the Old Motor townsite, the Walter Adams' family were pinned beneath a stone wall of their home. Mrs. Adams (Ethel) and their three year old son Lawrence were killed, found under 18" of limestone rock. Walter later said Ethel pulled on his sleeve for awhile, he having to "endure the torture of listening to her dying agony", but because he pinned in the debris up to his hips, he was unable to help her. Of the baby, he heard not a sound. Living with them at the time, Alice (Romine) Richmond, Ethel's sister, who fell under a table, protecting her. She received minor injuries. Walter was badly crippled and not expected to live, but he recovered after a long period of recuperation and he later moved to Colorado.

Northeast of Codell near Shiloh Cemetery, Mrs. Frank (Iva) Jones, her six children and their hired man, Alva Cross, were in the house when the storm broke. Alva, Mrs. Jones, and three of her children were blown some distance from the place where the house formerly stood. Six week old Lloyd was found dead in an alfalfa field some distance away from the house. The family dog, also injured, was found keeping watch over the baby. Another report said a neighbor's daughter found the baby, with a "big gash on its head", lying in the side of the road, and "it died three hours later." The same report said across the road in an alfalfa patch, they found a six year old girl, unconscious with bruises all over her body.

The Shiloh Presbyterian Church was destroyed, the cemetery fence flattened, and nearly all the tombstones blown down or overturned.

Because decades later Celeste (Lesta) Glendening wrote down her memories of the 1918 tornado, we have the most detailed account of the George Glendening family, living just north of Shiloh Church and cemetery. She recounted how she spent the day, baking bread, wallpapering the living room, washing windows, putting up fresh curtains, doing every day chores. Her vivid recollection of the weather that day sets the stage. And her account of that evening when it started to rain and the wind picked up, they decided to head to their cellar, but it was too late. The Glendening family - George, Celesta, sons Worden and Maxim and Celeste's brother, Evert, stood in the kitchen as the house came apart around them, dishes flying. The wind whipped 18 month old Max out of George's arms. Lesta, frantic, ripped off George's shirt, and George had to restrain her. In a flash of lightning, George saw Max wrapped in his comforter a few feet away, grabbed him and handed the unharmed Max to his mother. They then crawled on to the cellar. When they came out later, all that was left was their mailbox out at the road. Later someone found some of their things in a mud puddle including some clothing, a tablecloth, a towel or two and Lesta's wedding dress with very little damage done to it. Lesta sustained a serious cut on her leg, requiring stitches, nearly losing her leg. George, who was not wearing shoes during the storm, was unable to wear shoes for quite some time because his feet were cut in several places. One of the most common injuries of people injured in the Greensburg, Kansas tornado. Evert had a few scratches and cuts on his arms. Worden sustained a broke arm. And Max was the "only one not injured in an way and without a scratch." (Please note: The true story and six discrepancies are listed in the observation section below.)

One half mile east of Shiloh cemetery, Hilda, the baby daughter of Russell and Clara Mae Newlin, was blown away from her parents during the storm. The Newlin's, badly injured, made it to a neighbor's house for help. In the dark of night, neighbors scoured the wreckage and eventually found Hilda uninjured.

These are just a few of the 1918 Codell tornado stories. This tornado continued along a path north of Natoma, through the Mt. Ayr, Kill Creek, and Alton communities and as far north as Portis.

Observations made during my research:

1. Cyclone and tornado are not synonyms, even though cycle was an old fashion term often used to describe a tornado. The term Cyclone is inaccurate. Another term for tropical storm. However, you will find locals used the terms “cyclone” and “tornado” as interchangeable.
2. Misspelled names: I noticed, for example the last name of one family, the Newlin’s, was spelled three different ways - Newlin, Newland, Newlan - in various news papers. After 100 years, it is hard to verify which is the proper spelling, especially since no one is left in the area by that last name I could ask. However, I personally knew the couple involved, however in other incidents, I did not.
3. The women were often called Mrs. and then the husband’s name as in the case of Mrs. Walter (Ethel) Adams. Only one of local newspaper gave Mrs. Adams’ first name. All the other five newspapers referenced her as Mrs. Walter Adams. (I also verified her name on her tombstone located in Shiloh Cemetery.)
4. The one that disturbed me the most was the “it” Jones baby who died in the 1918 tornado. All the area newspapers called the six week old baby, Lloyd Jones, “it” not even a reference to gender. A friend, Gayla Wickham, assisted me in finding the baby’s first name using www.findagrave.com.
5. I found several small discrepancies in the same story reported in six area newspaper. However, the tornado story with the most discrepancies (7 different stories) was regarding what happened to 18 month old Max Glendening. Those stories (his mother’s story, two neighbors’ stories, and stories reported in area newspapers) are as follows: 1. Max was whipped out of his mother’s arms. A few minutes later, his father saw Max, wrapped in his quilt, unhurt. 2. Flew in the sky with his quilt wrapped around him. 3. Found in a basket nearby. 4. Max was found a wood pile, without the quilt and no nightclothes on. 5. Found in a draw naked. 6. Found in a nearby field with minor scratches. 7. Whipped out of his father’s arms, who caught Max by the heel and pulled him back down. Because his mother, Celeste Glendening wrote her story in great detail years later, we know Story #1 was true. She also said after being told what happened to him years later, Max went to school and told his own tall tales.

In conclusion, I will close with the article, “Pioneer Spirit Still Exists,” author unknown, as published in the Natoma Independent after the 1918 tornado - “Truly there is no greater heroism than those men and women are displaying, not a whine, not a complaint, only expressions of thankfulness that things are no worse. The spirit of the pioneer lives still in the hearts of their children, whose indomitable will and sturdy courage refuse to permit - even a Kansas cyclone to get the best of them.”

Resources: Alton Empire, Natoma Independent, Osborne County Farmer, Plainville Times, Rooks County Record, Stockton Review, Rooks county.net website, Ottawa Review website, Jackie Slimmer Langholz’ website (www.jlangholz.com), Rooks County Historical Museum, Stockton Public Library (microfilm), Osborne Library website, Plainville Library website, The Cougar, www.findagrave.com, <http://sites.google.com/view/Codell-Kansas-Tornadoes>, The Rooks County historical books, Lest We Forget, the Osborne County historical books, comments from descendants and neighbors as well as Codell, Natoma and Alton Facebook group members.

Adult Autobiography (tie)

My First Auto Trip

by Janice O. McIntosh, Lawrence, KS

I had recently celebrated my fourth birthday and I was looking forward to starting kindergarten in one more year. A few days before school ended, my dad told Mother and I that he would be leaving for Kansas to help his father with the wheat harvest again. But the big difference was that Mother and I were going to go along with him this time.

I was really excited and began jumping up and down happily, saying: “When do we leave? When do we leave?”

Mother smiled and replied “We leave in just three days. Do you think you can wait that long, honey?”

“Oh, I think so! I will try my best!”

Dad smiled broadly at me. “We have one more surprise for you.” he said as Mother reached under the table and handed me a huge bag. I opened it quickly.

Inside was a beautiful red suitcase with two fuzzy brown bears and lots of polka dots.

“Thank you both so much! What a wonderful gift for my first auto trip!” I said. I kissed both of my

parents, picked up my new suitcase and ran to the bedroom to begin packing!

The year was 1938, in the middle of the Great Depression. Money was tight for everyone. Children received one present for their birthday or for Christmas. Many children didn't receive any gifts at all. This wonderful little red suitcase was always very special to me!

Families did not go on many trips because road travel was a luxury. Many young people would have gone to college in better times; instead, they had to go to work to help their families, because the main breadwinner was unemployed. Many times, their employment hours were reduced; they needed financial help from their children if they could find jobs at all.

My dad was a high school history teacher. The school board paid him his salary in twelve monthly installments so he got a check every month. Most teachers got larger checks for nine months, but they got nothing in the summer, so they had to take a summer job. Dad got a smaller check each month, since his salary was divided into twelve parts. He liked this arrangement better because it was easier to budget expenses.

I remember the first Saturday of the month after Dad had received his paycheck. My parents would sit at the kitchen table, while they discussed how to pay their bills that month. There were four Maxwell one pound coffee cans. One can was for house expenses and insurance. Another one was for groceries and utilities. A third one was for medical and dental expenses. The fourth one was for savings if there was anything left to save.

Times were hard for every one and my parents were very frugal. If I recall correctly. My Dad only made two hundred dollars a month plus extra money which he earned selling tickets at the high school football and basketball games. He enjoyed sports very much, so it was a really nice perk for him to be able to watch the games for free! It was also enjoyable to be able to watch his students who were on the teams.

My grandparents always paid my Dad money after the wheat was sold which really helped our family when funds were scarce. But for me, the biggest joy was the chance to bond with my grandparents and get to know the many aunts, uncles and cousins who lived in the region of Glasco.

They all enjoyed picnics, pot lucks and just being together on Sunday afternoons for visiting and homemade ice cream. Since we lived seven hundred miles away up in Wisconsin, and I was an only child this gathering was a special delight for me.

At last we were ready to start on our exciting adventure. Dad led the way to our porch and down the six steps to the car with a large suitcase in each hand.

Mother followed with a picnic basket in one hand, and a large sack of groceries in the other. I came next with my little red suitcase, a thermos of lemonade and a big smile on my face! At last we were on our way.

The plan was to drive part way and then find a place to spend the night. There weren't motels at that time, but many towns had rows of cabins that could be rented for the night.

Glasco was seven hundred miles from Waukesha, Wisconsin where we lived at the present time. My dad figured we needed to drive at least three hundred and fifty miles a day. Since cars at that time only averaged about forty miles an hour we needed to be driving about nine hours each day. Of course one needed to allow time for meals, bathroom breaks and stops for gas.

Fortunately, my parents were early risers so we always got an early start. We were able to stop and get settled in before dark. There were no radios in cars, or tapes or movies to watch in the back seat for entertainment, so my parents had to be creative to keep me from being restless and bored.

My parents had both been teachers and were good with ideas to keep me interested. They gave me a map and helped me to follow our route and learn the towns we passed through and something noteworthy about the communities.

Mom sat in the back seat and played cards with me endlessly. There was Old Maid, Crazy Eights and many others. She also told me stories about her life in Northwest Iowa when she was a little girl.

Then it was my turn to make up a story to tell her. That was really fun. I have been told I had quite an imagination as a little child and I enjoyed using it whenever I had a chance.

The three of us tried singing, but that wasn't too successful! Mother was tone deaf or a "non-singer" as her teacher once told her. Dad could barely carry a tune but he tried to join in as best he could and watch his driving at the same time. I didn't know the words of the songs very well but I tried my best to learn them.

The miles flew by and soon it was lunch time. Mother and I looked for a picnic area not far from the highway and Dad pulled in when we spotted one. There were clean picnic tables and benches and a

nice rest room. It was a good place to settle in for lunch.

Mom had made our favorite sandwiches. They were brown sugar and butter mixed together with added pecan pieces. They were delicious. As I think back, we never had them once I was grown and no one but my Mom ever made them. I have a feeling that people became more health conscious later and brown sugar and butter mixed was not a very healthy combination, but they sure were good!

Mother had fixed hard boiled eggs, carrot sticks, apple slices and her wonderful molasses cookies. Then of course we had the ice cold thermos of lemonade that I had carefully looked after since proudly carrying it to the car earlier that morning.

Lunch was great and we soon were on our way. After an hour or so, Dad said it was time to stop for gas. My mother often remarked how the closer we got to Kansas, the friendlier the gas station attendants were. They not only chatted while they filled your car, cleaned your windshield and checked the pressure of your tires, but they were always more than willing to answer your questions about the area such as good places to eat and towns who had nice cabins to stay at.

There was usually a large steel tank filled with ice water and several kinds of cold soda in glass bottles. There was a slot for coins, another place to open your soda and that box held all the bottle caps. I often asked if I could have the bottle caps and the answer was always an enthusiastic YES!

This became a wonderful game of sort and count. Mother got an empty box from the car and the station attendant emptied the bottle caps in to my box. Sometimes there was only two or three but usually there were 15 or 20 and; I was thrilled. We got back in the car and shook all my caps to the bottom of the back seat and the game began.

First I sorted the caps by color and put them in separate piles. Then I counted each pile and systematically wrote the number and kind down and put each group in a separate bag, I put the bags aside and waited patiently for us to need gas again. I was lucky because Dad decided to fill up the the car so we could start early in the morning, That was good because it gave me a chance to collect more bottle caps to start my game in the morning!

Dad got the gas and I got the bottle caps. There was a large group this time and I was thrilled! Then we drove over to register for a cabin Dad had heard about.

As he got out of the car, Mother said to Dad; "Be sure and check for bedbugs, George. The papers say they are really prevalent this year."

Little did they realize that I was listening very closely to their conversation. I filed that statement away in my head, but I never said a word.

Dad rented the cabin and we walked across the street to a small cafe. We had a delicious home cooked meal topped off by warm apple pie and vanilla ice cream. Dad paid the bill and we slowly walked back to our cabin.

It was late and we were all tired, so Dad unpacked the car and brought in the suitcases. We washed up and got on our pajamas and got into the large bed and Mother read a nice story about Chicken Little. Remember the chicken who warned the other barnyard animals that the sky was falling in?

The bed was big enough for the three of us. I slept on the side next to Mom. Around 2:00A.M., Mom became worried about me because I hadn't moved one bit. She was concerned when I stiffened my legs when she tried to move me.

I had been born during the Great Depression, when polio was every parent's nightmare. President Roosevelt polio; he was confined to a wheelchair, though it was carefully hidden from the public. There were few treatments and no cure; a child could go to bed completely healthy and wake up crippled for life!

Mother decided to move me a little to see if I was O.K.

That was a big mistake.

I bolted straight up screaming bloody murder and yelling. "Chicken Little was right! The sky is falling down!"

As I continued to scream loudly, my Dad woke up. He came over, took me from the bed and started walking the floor with me. After about ten minutes I had quit sobbing and I had calmed down, so Dad decided to put me back in bed.

That was the second big mistake.

I stiffened my legs and hugged Dad and began screaming loudly once more. Dad decided putting me back to bed was not the answer, so he continued to walk with me, until I fell asleep. Then he sat in the big flowered easy the chair with me on his lap. I fell sound asleep and slept until the rays of the early morning sun began peeking through the cabin's only window.

I slept well the last part of the night. However, I can't say the same for my parents. They just couldn't figure out what had been wrong.

Dad suggested we get dressed, pack up and go back to the nice restaurant that we had enjoyed the night before. Dad and Mom each ordered coffee and cereal.

I ordered a cup of hot chocolate and a cherry frosted doughnut. Normally, that would not have been allowed but today nothing was said. Mom and Dad were too weary to say anything. They were so grateful I was O.K. they just let it go.

Dad began the conversation by asking quietly what had happened last night. Would I like to tell them?

"Of course." I replied sweetly. "A bed bug tried to bite me last night and I was really scared."

"What did the bed bug look like?" inquired Mother

"I couldn't see him very well." I replied. "But he was the size of a turtle with a shiny black back and a red head. He had two long fingers that tried to grab me and that is why I screamed. There was no way I was going to stay in that bed in case he came back again. What if there were other bugs in there with him?"

Mother and Dad smiled at me. Dad said "Mystery solved!" as he heaved a huge sigh of relief.

Dad paid the bill and left a nice tip for the waitress. The three of us left the restaurant holding hands with big smiles on our faces. We returned to the cabin and only Dad went in and Mother and I remained outside for obvious reasons.

Soon we were on our way to Glasco where there would be hugs from Grandpa and Grandma waiting for us, as well as one of Grandma's wonderful fried chicken dinners with mashed potatoes. and gravy and peas from her garden, homemade pickles and a delicious angel food cake. Grandma was famous for her good cooking. Now I would be able to have one of her delicious dinners tonight for the first time.

This would be the first of my many trips to Glasco, which were some of the biggest highlights of my life.

Adult Autobiography (tie)

Driving across Kansas, The Land of Awe

by Suzanne Waring, Great Falls, MT

I have lived in Montana for over forty-five years, but I grew up and have family in Kansas. When I tell people I am from the sunflower state, they always want to tell me about seeing flat, boring landscape when driving across Interstate 70. My husband and I have made the trip across Kansas from the northwest to the southeast at least a hundred times, and I can tell you that I have had completely different experiences on both Interstate 70 and on the "blue highways." I look back on scenes from those trips with awe.

The first time I saw wind chargers in great numbers was west of Salina as they waved to me from the hillsides on both sides of the Interstate. It was not the first time I had seen a wind charger. That happened near Lamar, Colorado. We were driving up a hill and I saw these two what seemed to be very tall wooden stilts walking across the crest of the hill. It was eerie. When we got to the top of the hill, I discovered it was the propellers of a wind charger that happened to be in a strategic place to look as if they were a pair of stilts. Seeing the wind chargers west of Salina added to that experience. I always try to count the chargers in a wind farm because I know that each one is producing renewable energy.

I like Kansas sunsets. One of the most beautiful skies of pink and grey clouds against the blue sky tinted with streaks of golden light was seen from one of the roadside parks in Kansas. Another time I took a photograph of the little church on the grounds of the Yesteryear Museum at Salina. The church was silhouetted in front of the setting sun. It made me think of the author, Willa Cather's, words in *My Antonia*, "...the sun was going down in a limpid, gold-washed sky. Just as the lower edge of the red disk rested on the high fields against the horizon, a great black figure suddenly appeared on the face of the sun....On some upland farm, a plough had been left standing in the field....Magnified across the distance by the horizontal light, it stood out against the sun."

Speaking of churches, in the very northwest corner of Kansas, we were stopped by a law enforcement officer because they needed the entire highway for a country church that was being moved

to the museum in town. We joined the townspeople in watching the movers lift the church just a bit higher so it would clear the railings on the bridge over a small creek.

Just when I think I have remembered all the great views in Kansas, I recount another one. I have always liked driving next to the Neosho Riverwalk in Council Grove and seeing the old downtown buildings that have been so well preserved.

One fall we were aiming for I-70 and drove north on 177 out of Council Grove. I read a lot when we are traveling, and I remember looking up from my book and seeing the golden-leaved trees against the green hills (yes, hills) in that area. The scenery rivaled anything I ever saw in the Missouri Ozarks. I put my book down and enjoyed the countryside.

That area had many trees, but as enjoyable is the terrain of the Flint Hills. Getting to the crest of a hill, you can see for miles and miles with few trees obstructing the scenery. I like traveling through the Flint Hills when the prairie is alive with wild flowers blossoming various colors. There's nothing flat about the Flint Hills.

I'm a sucker for old buildings. I have taken photos of several of the county courthouses in Kansas. I especially like the one in Osborne, and I remember catching my breath when we turned the corner and drove down the brick paved street toward Chase County's courthouse in Cottonwood Falls. Since then, I have seen photos of the courthouse all lit up as the focus in the photo with the Main Street buildings decorated for Christmas lining each side. I would like to see that. It's on my bucket list.

I got so excited when I discovered the sign in the park at Downs, Kansas, introducing the traveler to *Sod and Stubble*, a book that my mother and I enjoyed many years earlier. I looked across the terrain that day when we drove out of Downs and tried to imagine a young girl marrying, leaving her family, and riding out with a team and wagon with her new husband to begin a life in that part of Kansas that was yet to be settled.

Being a farm girl myself, I like to see what crops are being raised. When we realized that a lot more irrigation was going on in western Kansas, we marveled at the vast irrigation equipment and started counting the number of sections on a center pivot. The highest number we have counted is eighteen sections. That's an amazing amount of weight to be swung around a field, and I marveled at the mechanization making it possible.

When people complain about the boring flat land they traverse when traveling across Kansas, I tell them, "You must have been looking at the pavement and not really taking in the scenery."

Adult Fiction

I Married a Traveling Man

by Nila LaRea Denton, Stockton, KS

Standing on the covered porch of her two story white washed house, shading her eyes from the glaring sun overhead, Sarah, serenely smiling, watched the little girl, her granddaughter, Hazel, running toward her. Long, auburn colored braids, flapping rhythmically on her back, and a large grin on her face, Hazel ran to close the distance between her and her grandmother as fast as her little legs would carry her.

"Granny! Granny!" Hazel cried out between staggered breathes. "Mama said I could come for a visit after I finished my chores." Stopping in front of Granny, she leaned over, gulping for breath, then turned her face up, smiling impishly, "She told me I did such a good job sweeping the floors and gathering the eggs, I didn't have to bring my brothers, Asa and John, with me."

Holding back a chuckle and trying hard not to smile, the grandmother replied, "I glad you came for a visit, with or without your brothers." Reaching out her wrinkled, time worn hand, the grandmother grasped Hazel's small hand, and led her inside the house.

Upon entering the living room, Hazel walked right over the old battered open steam trunk against the far wall, and gently picked up a cloth doll, her grimy face a testimony of the many little hands who had played with her over the years. Expectantly, Hazel looked up at her granny, who had followed the little girl across the room, and said, "Granny, please tell me Ada's story again. How she has traveled many miles and lived so many places."

Looking down at her granddaughter, her eyes glistening with love, Granny snuck a glimpse at the doll, dressed in a red, faded gingham dress and matching bonnet. She looked back at Hazel's expectant, joyful face. As she sat down in her nearby rocking chair, Granny pulled Hazel and the doll up on her lap, settling down in anticipation of sharing once again the adventurous travels of Ada, the well traveled doll.

"Well, you see," Granny said, her eyes twinkling, a faraway look in her eyes as she glanced toward the open window where the curtains fluttered in the breeze," Ada was born a long, long time ago in Holmes County, Ohio." Lowering her head towards Hazel's ear, she whispered conspiringly, "By born, I mean a grandmother made Ada for her granddaughter she loved dearly." Sitting back up straight, her arms wrapped gingerly around Hazel, she continued, "This grandmother knew her granddaughter, Sarah, was moving to Iowa with her family, and she wanted to give her little Sarah someone special to play with. And to remind her how much her grandmother back in Ohio loved her and would miss her. Sarah was sad to leave her grandmother, so she loved her new dolly she named Ada and clutched her tightly to her chest, promising never to let Ada go.

Why? Sarah did take Ada with her in the wagon when they moved to Iowa. She played hours and hours and hours with Ada. And whenever Sarah missed her grandmother, she hugged Ada even harder.

Years went by, and Sarah grew up. When she was 19 years old, she married a fine, handsome young man named Albert Norris. He was a widower with two small children, George, 7 years old and Nancy, 2 years old. Now the new stepmother knew little Nancy was missing her mama something fierce, so Sarah let her play with Ada. She even made Nancy a doll of her own so Ada would have a friend and not be lonesome also.

Not long afterwards, Sarah's her husband decided they should all move. He'd already lived in Ohio, Illinois and Iowa, so he chose Missouri to be their next home. Sarah loaded up her belongings and tucked Ada in a corner of her trunk, much like the one there in the corner. While they lived in Forrest City, Missouri, Jonathan, the first of their nine children, was born. Not long afterwards, three more babies came along named Jennie, Stephen and James.

But there came a time when Albert wanted to move again, this time to Nebraska. So they again loaded up their things in the wagon and headed for a farm near Salem, Nebraska. And yes, Ada made the trip with them. In Nebraska, Albert and Sarah had five more children: Alice, Nelson, John, Ella and Eva. And the girls loved Ada so much, rocking her and giving her hugs just like Sarah had done when she was a little girl.

By this time, Albert and Sarah had been married over 30 years and Albert was in his 60's. You would have thought having lived all these different places in several states, that by now Albert was ready to stay put, but one day he told Sarah he wanted to move to Kansas and file a homestead claim. And that's just what they did. Now they had so many in their family, they had to buy a second wagon. Sarah again carefully packed their belongings they needed to take with them, and of course, she tucked much loved Ada in her trunk for the move to Kansas.

Once they arrived in Rooks County, Albert filed his claim, and they settled down to farming once again. Albert has lived many places. Why, he's lived in six states. That's quite an accomplishment. Guess his wandering curiosity and sense of adventure finally got the best of him when he decided to stay in Kansas at long last. And I'm so grateful."

"What do you mean, Granny?" Hazel asked with a puzzled look on her face.

Sarah smiled and looked up at her husband, standing silently in the kitchen doorway, him having just come in the back door from doing chores. "I have followed Albert all over, but I sure didn't know when I married him I married a traveling man."