



P O E M S

B D

E. E. Swagerty

MOTHER

*Mother, the one we all adore;
Mother, whose wisdom we all implore,
Whose grace and tenderness and love
Is surely sent from heaven above.
From mother's breast we first are fed;
It's by mother's love we first are led
From babyhood, with all it's care,
To childhood, where we do and dare.
Dare to crawl out in the mud
And cause dear mother to scrub and scrub.
Dare to climb up in the trees
Then fall out and skin our knees;
Dares to use up sister's paint
To learn that she's no living saint;
Dares to scatter daddy's tools
And run behind his kicking mules,
Causing dad to rave and paw,
And swear we're the worst he ever saw,
And scare us half out of our wits
By throwing seven kinds of fits;
But then we know in mother's care
We're sure to find a refuge there.
No matter what wrongs they all may claim
Dear mother will say we're not to blame.
Then when we grow up to our teens;
And nothing's proper, so it seems;
When dad will say, "Look here, my son,
To go out nights you're far too young,"
And, "Daughter, who is that young sap
And will you please keep out his lap?"
It's mother again who seems to know
That through this phase we'll surely grow.
That while we're raw and coarse and green,
Given plenty of time we'll come out clean,
And try to show we've what it takes
To win our game despite the breaks.
To win our game be what it may;
Business, labor, or just play;
But in trying, should we slip
And somehow sort of lose our grip,
And friends we thought were tried and true
Will pass us by when we are through
And all our castles, every one,
Have vanished like the setting sun,
And our very souls all shriveled up
Till we're almost ready for the fatal cup;
It's mother again, who seems to share
Our griefs and sorrows no matter where.
Pours ointment on our troubled soul,
Helps bolster up another goal;
A goal so high that could we fly,
We'd reach it though it were in the sky.*

FIFTY YEARS

*When Uncle Sam was still a boy,
And fire arms was to all a toy,
When buffalo still unmolested trod
The prairies green and virgin sod
And Injuns roamed the wilds in bands
And scalped the white man with crafty hands
Then retired farther, and farther west
When crowded hard for a bit of rest
As settlers came in search of homes
Oft marring the prairie with their bones.
A couple clasped their hands and wed
Then hied themselves to a homestead.
They broke the tough productive sod
And smashed and crumbled every clod
They raised their wheat and made their bread
And hitched old dobin to the sled
And drove to town many miles away
To get their provinder of the day.
But when they woke one beautiful morn
To hear their neighbor toot his horn
It got them so nervous they couldn't rest
So they boarded a train and hit for the west.
They traveled up and down the coast
But California was their final host.
Instead of blustery snow and ice
They thought her winter a paradise
The summer too was good and hot
So they decided they had struck the spot
To settle down and stay for life
This restless man and his trusty wife.
Of course they raised some girls and boys
Which caused them many woes and joys.
But they were soon grown and scattered around
And settled in many a different town.
And they in turn had some little ones
Daughters, grand, and great grandsons
The likes of which when in one place
Do fill an awful awful space
Then if you'll count each and every shoe
You'll find they'll make twice fifty-two.
Now that's not so bad when you come to think
It's but fifty years since they crossed the brink*

*Written for Elmer's Parents
50th wedding celebration*

WHY GRANDPA

*Why did they make a grandpa outa me?
I hardly think it's fair. Why can't you see,
They've subtly went and took away my youth,
For I'm only forty-nine to tell the truth.
What is this awful thing they've went and done?
For me it seems that life had just begun.
The sun shines as brightly as of yore,
No clouds of doom seems hanging o'er my door,
The world seems just as rosy and as gay,
I hadn't even thought of getting gray.
I can hardly believe it's true. No-sirree.
Why did they make a grandpa outa me?*

*Now they've pulled the punch out, so it seems,
They've robbed the honey outa my best dreams,
The marrow seems to have left my very bones,
My ears no longer catch the more gentler tones,
I fairly shrink with horror and with dread,
When I try to slip a comb o'er my bald head,
There seems to be a weakness in my knee,
I guess my back ain't quite as strong as it used to be,
And if, per chance, a book I'd try to read,
I have to don some specs ee'r I succeed.
No right had they to do this thing you see.
Why did they make a grandpa outa me?*

*But when I look into the little shaver's face,
I can hardly keep a smile from creeping o'er my face,
He fairly teems with brightness and with hope.
Why in the world should anybody grope,
Why frown and cast my eyes upon the ground,
Or let the boogy chase me round and round?
Upon a brighter star I'll fix my gaze,
For now I've got a new grandson to raise.
He'll be the inspiration and the joy,
That'll make me feel I'm once again a boy.
And that, dear folks, you can plainly see,
Is why they made a grandpa outa me.*

E.E.S.

A YEAR

*Since last we met it's been a year.
The same old sun still brings us cheer.
It warms our blood and gives us hope,
To find our way, though oft we grope
Through darkness and a world of haze,
Always looking for those brighter days.*

*It's just a year from May to May,
Yet once again we meet to play;
All other cares we set aside
To best reveal our better side,
And greet each other, one and all,
To make this day the best of all.*

*It's been a year since last we spread,
Our gracious lunch and all was fed.
And say, dear folks, was that some feed?
There surely was no cause for greed.
Yet when it was o'er, you could plainly see,
There was plenty of signs of agony.*

*It's been a year, we don't regret
Because our mother's with us yet.
Her youth is gone, we'll grant that's true;
But still her love's as good as new.
Her form's some bent, she's not so proud,
Yet she's the loveliest in this crowd.*

OUR TRIP

1.

*The pears were gone
To ports beyond
The ladders were in store
The skys were gray
The fogs they'd say,
Vacation's here once more.*

2.

*The Ford was fixed
The trailer hitched
And grub was stored galore
The maps secured
The routes we toured
Were studied o'er and o'er.*

3.

*Till when at last
Friends hands we'd clasped
And made our get-away
It was as though
We had to know
Just how old Kansas lay.*

4.

*The seats were full
That Lizzie'd pull
Just five to be exact
There was one to steer
And one to cheer
And three stowed in the back.*

5.

*There's mother dear
So full of cheer
Who always had a smile
And Jack the rookie
Who loves his cookie
As he crunched them mile on mile.*

6.

*There was uncle George so very large
And ready with his wit
Who loved to chew
Why no one knew
Because he had to spit.*

7.

*And Grandma too
With dresses new
All peped up for the trip
Old friends to trace
To see their face
And give their hands a grip.*

8.

*And dad was there
To furnish fare
And steer old Lizzie through
To make the trip without a slip
The way he loves to do.*

9.

*We rolled along
A merry throng
As mile on mile we'd drive
Just buying gas
In towns we'd pass
To keep the thing alive.*

10.

*In Reno of course
We sought divorce
Just why I hardly know
For to make the trip
We daren't slip
Or get careless with our dough.*

11.

*So we passed it up
As a bitter cup
The gambling joints to see
But once in sight
Wife wouldn't alight
So to travel we did all agree.*

12.

*Now the skys were still gray
And it rained all day
As the desert hove in sight.
400 miles that day
Put us well on our way
By a tank we made camp for the night.*

13.

*Let the night wind blow
Where the cactus grow
And the lone wolf's prone to roam.
We slept all night on our air bags tight
And dream't of the loved ones home.*

14.

*For days we drove
And hard by jove
Old Kansas for to see
Across the plains
And mountain chains
And lands without a tree.*

15.

*Through cities too
Though they were few
Just two to be exact
The first you know
Was Brigham's show
Where wives they didn't lack.*

16.

*Till Uncle Sam
Dealt out his hand
And did to all decree
To have more wives
Than God gave lives
Just simply could not be.*

17.

*And Denver say
We'd drove all day
The rockies were no more
We paid our fare
And camped right there
Its beauty to explore.*

18.

*The fields were green
The trees they'd seem
To make us think of home
The place we love
Thank God above
Why did we ever roam.*

19.

*Then on our way
The following day
It all just seemed a dream
The prairie dreary
And us all weary
No end so it would seem*

20.

*Then boy! Oh, boy!
And ship ahoy!
Just make our anchor fast
We saw the sign
We'd crossed the line
Old Kansas here at last.*

21.

*Now folks don't shout
No use to pout
This land we came to see
Here they raise grain without much rain
You seldom see a tree.*

22.

*The people there
Don't seem to care
There worries are but brief
If crops should fail
Or have no sale
They'd simply take relief.*

23.

*Of course there's some
Not prone to bum
Good folks you'll all agree
They work real hard
To earn their lard
There from my family tree.*

24.

*First my Aunt Belle
We had a spell
We thought we saw a ghost
By our good grace
T'was Lucy's face
But she was on the coast.*

25.

*And Howard too
We could construe
A likeness of some sort
To E. Hoffman of Washington
Once harbored in our port.*

26.

*Then near Belout
We found the scout
Clif Underwood that's right,
We had a sup
Then got right up
And drove with all our might.*

27.

*T'was George you know
For home would go
His loved ones to caress
Concordia say
Was his wife gay
When she landed that new dress.*

28.

*Near here we met
Mother's sister Net
A farmer she had wed
We spent the day
All felt quite gay
Then back to town we sped.*

29.

*Her daughter Nell
Who feeds quite well
Put on a chow next night
And all was there
To share her fare
She sure did things up right.*

30.

*Then on we went
Where the Hoffmans rent
A place near one they own
From here we found
Dad's stomping ground
And his cabin made of stone.*

31.

*We also found
Grandfather's mound
It seemed so long ago
Since he was there
Dad's love to share
And see the country grow.*

32.

*Now Will's some host
He had the most
Folks gather in that night
The place was small
To hold them all
They sure were packed in tight*

33.

*One more jaunt east
Another feast
Was Mary Gaden glad
For she knew Ma,
And she knew Paw,
When he was just a lad.*

34.

*Manhatan whoa
We dare not go
Beyond your pearly gate
For if we do
My boss might stew
Should I come home too late.*

35.

*So face about
The southern route
You don't need sympathize
There's plenty more
Yes kin galore
Some lived at Enterprize.*

36.

*His name was Tom
But if a bomb
Exploded in his ear
He'd brush his face
And then say grace
Because he couldn't hear.*

37.

*Tom Swagerty
A blacksmith he
Whose trade had served him well
He bought a place
And changed its face
I think he's doing swell.*

38.

*Salinas right
We stopped alnight
With Gladys Durham neat
Then on to Dodge
We did not lodge
Just had a bite to eat.*

39.

*T'was Irma Page
Who married age
We talked about an hour
Then did depart
For rare Elkhart
Where Will took care of power.*

40.

*Will Swagerty
Cousin yesserie
Father's brother's son you know
When dad came west
Well I'll be blest
Ann settled there to sew.*

41.

*Now the skys were all gray
And it rained next day
Aunt Addie was our host
She seemed so spry
Yet time don't lie
Eight children she could boast.*

42.

*There's Ben and Will
What another thrill
For a likeness we could note
Although quite large
Upon Wills Barge
Was Wilber plainly wrote.*

43.
*Six girls there were
Two still with her
Quite happy were the three
They did their best
To please their guests
As you could plainly see.*

44.
*We spent the day
Then hit the hay
Now why do people roam
For e'r dawn came
Right through the rain
Another girl came home.*

45.
*And God bless you
The Trimbles too
They had no place to sleep
Was that some plight
Right in the night
We almost thought to weep.*

46.
*But err tears fell
We broke the spell
Our trailer we did spy
For it was fixed
For just such tricks
A place for all to lie.*

47.
*When we awoke
The storm had broke
The sun was in the sky
So we took heart
And did depart
To all we said good bye.*

48.
*The roads were wet
And slick you bet
It made old Lizzie slide
Down through a wash
And stuck by gosh
It surely was some ride.*

49.
*In Kansas no
Its New Mexico
Across the Okie. line
By cutting wood
He earns his food
This final kin of mine.*

50.
*Another Will
A Swagerty still
Tom's brother I do fear
He looks like Tom
Explode a bomb
And neither one could hear.*

51.
*Had a homestead they
That raised no hay
And neither did they mine
This stalwart man
His wife of tan
They gathered pinion pine.*

52.
*A home had they
With walls of clay
The sides were built of stone
With children two
And neighbors few
They lived somewhat alone.*

53.
*But happy say
They seemed quite gay
They had nothing to regret
Their homestead clear
Their patient near
They'll make their way you bet.*

54.
*Now this dear guests
Doth end our quests
For kinsfolks we should know
So on our way
We dare not play
T'is homeward we must go.*

55.
*Through Santa Fe
To Albuquerque
And Gallup what a throng
Of Indian faces
With pottery vases
Our journey they did prolong.*

56.
*We thought to snap
Their ugly map
Just for a souvenir
But hide their faces
Till we bought vases
They certainly did act queer.*

57.

*Now folks prepare
For something rare
A desert dawbed with paint
With rocks piled high
All smeared with dye
It surely did look quaint.*

58.

*But why stay here
Grand Canyon's near
We're anxious to behold
It's chasms deep
It's banks so steep
Made by the river bold.*

59.

*Just take a look
Then write a book
It's wonders to explain
Gray hairs will come
Err that book's done
You'll find it's all in vain.*

60.

*So I'll not try
To please your eye
You'll have to go and view
It's grandeur rare
If you should share
The picture as I do.*

61.

*So on to Boulder
Where they holder
Water mile on mile
It's the largest dam
In Uncle Sam
It certainly is worth while.*

62.

*They took us through
The tunnel new
The power house if you please
Where they make juice
To fry your goose
And light Los Angeles.*

63.

*The flagpole's there
But placed just where
We did not chance to see
A stately pole
Yet not a soul
Remembers where t'would be.*

64.

*Now the skies were still gray
And it rained next day
Towards evening it did pour
T'was tough that's true
But we drove right through
Hurrah our journey's o'er.*

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