

Life In Poetry

Christmas Memories And Nature Settings

BY TED KOOSER
U.S. Poet Laureate

The first winter my wife and I lived in the country, I brought a wild juniper tree in from our pasture and prepared to decorate it for Christmas. As it began to warm up, it started to smell as if a coyote, in fact a number of coyotes, had stopped to mark it, and it was soon banished to the yard. Jeffrey Harrison, a poet who lives in Massachusetts, had a much better experience with nature.

NEST

It wasn't until we got the Christmas tree into the house and up on the stand that our daughter discovered a small bird's nest tucked among its needled branches.

Amazing, that the nest had made it all the way from Nova Scotia on a truck washed together with hundreds of other trees without being dislodged or crushed.

And now it made the tree feel wilder, a balsam fir growing in our living room, as though at any moment a bird might flutter through the house and return to the nest.

And yet, because we'd brought the tree indoors, we'd turned the nest into the first ornament. So we wound the tree with strings of lights, draped it with strands of red beads,

and added the other ornaments, then dropped two small brass bells into the nest, like eggs containing music, and hung a painted goldfinch from the branch above, as if to keep them warm.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright © 2011 by Jeffrey Harrison, whose most recent book of poems is "Incomplete Knowledge," Four Way Books, 2006. Reprinted from upstreet, No. 8, June 2012, by permission of Jeffrey Harrison and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 2012 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

SCHOLASTICS

CARLA STEPPAT

OMAHA, Neb. — Clarkson College is pleased to announce Carla Steppat of Yankton received her Master of Science in Nursing; Family Nurse Practitioner degree on Dec. 8, 2012.

CAITLIN HOF

STORM LAKE, Iowa — The innovative Undergraduate Rural Medicine Education and Development (URMED) program developed five years ago through a partnership with Buena Vista University (BVU) and Buena Vista Regional Medical Center (BVRMC) has selected three students for its January 2013 capstone program.

BVRMC provides experiential learning opportunities throughout the academic year for BVU students pursuing careers in medicine and other health care professions. The capstone of the URMED program is an intensive January internship for selected BVU pre-med students who have an interest in practicing rural medicine.

One of the students selected is Caitlin Hof, a junior biology, chemistry, and psychology triple major from Yankton.

"I applied for the URMED program because I believe it will give me a great insight into the medical field," said Caitlin. "I hope to learn more about rural medicine as I hope to practice somewhere in the Midwest. In the future, having this experience will really benefit me. I will have prior experiences to draw from during medical school interviews and it will show me more of the day to day happenings of a hospital. It will help me reaffirm my interest in medicine."

Other hospitals participating in URMED this year are Humboldt County Memorial Hospital, Loring Hospital in Sac City and Pocahontas Community Hospital. Each of the students will intern at BVRMC for two weeks and then one week at one of the other hospitals. The participating hospitals and BVU, through donor support, provide financial resources for \$3,000 URMED stipends awarded to each student to help them defray the costs of applying to medical schools.

"URMED serves both the hospital and the university well by attracting top quality students who are considering their future in medicine," says Dr. Richard Lampe, professor of biology who helped develop the URMED

partnership and is also current chair of the BVRMC board of trustees. "Many BVU students come from rural backgrounds and may find it appealing to continue their life and their career in such a setting. I have been very pleased to see our URMED scholars become excited about the high quality of our medical community and the fine outcomes that patients have through BVRMC. Such experiences promote the likelihood of these same students seriously considering returning to the Storm Lake region to have their medical practice."

The URMED program was designed as one possible solution to the impending national shortage of physicians and other healthcare practitioners in rural communities. While the URMED alumni have no obligation to return to the communities where they interned, BVU science faculty, and officials at BVRMC and the other participating hospitals stay in regular contact and build ongoing relationships with them. The URMED program is also attracting new BVU students who are interested in health care careers, adds Lampe.

"URMED gives the students the chance to work directly with physicians and other health care professionals," says Brad Strader, executive director of the BVRMC Foundation and physician recruiter. "It also gives the participating hospitals a chance to see the students in action and evaluate their dedication and level of interest in taking the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) and applying to medical schools." Strader, a member of the URMED selection committee, also maintains contact with URMED students who are admitted to medical schools as they progress in their medical education, including opportunities for a clinical rotation at BVRMC.

To date, seven BVU graduates who completed the URMED program are medical students, five others have been accepted to medical schools or are in the application process, and two are employed in related health care fields.

Hubby Turning Into Slowpoke

BY TOM AND RAY MAGLIOZZI
King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Dear Tom and Ray:
I am 65 and not yet ready to become a "geezerette." My husband is two years older, and although he may look like one, he is not a geezer yet either. Except when he drives in our university town, that is. He is making me nuts. We have a couple of four-lane main drags in our town with 45-mph speed limits. He drives in the passing lane at 35 with a beatific smile on his face. Last evening, after taking my mother to supper and driving through the same residential neighborhood we always do, he drove 20 mph and commented: "That house really intrigues me. ... Hmmm, the utilities are marked there. ... That bush has bloomed twice this year." I was tempted to jump out of the car. We were going so slowly that I probably wouldn't have been hurt. This issue is not a problem on the highway. He knows exactly how much over the speed limit he can go to not get ticketed. Once in eastern Colorado, he was driving 95 in my BMW. Just to show you the kind of guy he is, this car was his 40th wedding anniversary gift to me.

One Saturday we were going to the farmer's market, and I insisted on driving. When we got home, he said: "Well, you have an extra minute and a half. I hope you do something constructive with it." Ouch. My husband is a professional guy and still runs a consulting firm, works out several times a week and volunteers in a variety of places. I just don't want to drive with a geezer and have others perceive him as one! Help! — Gayle

TOM: I've got bad news for you, Gayle. Your husband IS a geezer. And before all you geezers write to us and complain, please note that we use the word "geezer" as a term of endearment. Like "knucklehead."

RAY: My brother should know. He's both. But on the geezer side, his average driving speed has declined from about 42.5 mph to 15 in recent years.



CAR TALK

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

TOM: Well, some things change when you get older.

RAY: Like the age range for potential dates in your personals ad, which I see you've adjusted to "48 to 108."

TOM: Well, I've noticed that at some point, my reflexes started slowing down. My eyes don't notice things so quickly, and my brain and body don't react to them as fast. So, in the interests of self-protection, my brain has made me drive slower, so things feel manageable.

RAY: Yeah. I don't think he made a conscious decision to slow down; I think his brain did it for him, because it was sending the message that driving faster doesn't feel safe.

TOM: As long as I'm aware of what's going on around me, and I'm not making a traffic hazard of myself (like by going 35 in the passing lane), it's fine to drive a little slower.

RAY: So I don't think you really want your hubby to speed up, Gayle. Even though he isn't saying so, I suspect he doesn't feel safe driving at normal speeds anymore. He even feels unsafe when YOU'RE driving at a higher speed, because it seems much faster to him than it used to.

TOM: Why is he fine on the highway? Well,

my guess is that highway driving is easier for him. There are no turns in the road, no crossing or even oncoming traffic, no pedestrians, no parked cars, no bicyclists, no tree limbs. So it's easier for him to maintain a steady speed without the distractions.

RAY: So if you're convinced that he's cognitively OK — and it sounds like he is, from the work he's doing — and you're convinced that he's not doing this just to drive you crazy, then you want to check the basics and make sure his eyesight and hearing are where they should be.

TOM: If he passes those tests, then he's just entering geezerdom. Sorry, Gayle — it happens to all of us! Or at least those lucky enough to make it that far. In which case, you have two choices.

RAY: One is to take up meditation. That'll help you learn to accept life at his new speed. The other is to do the driving yourself when you go out together.

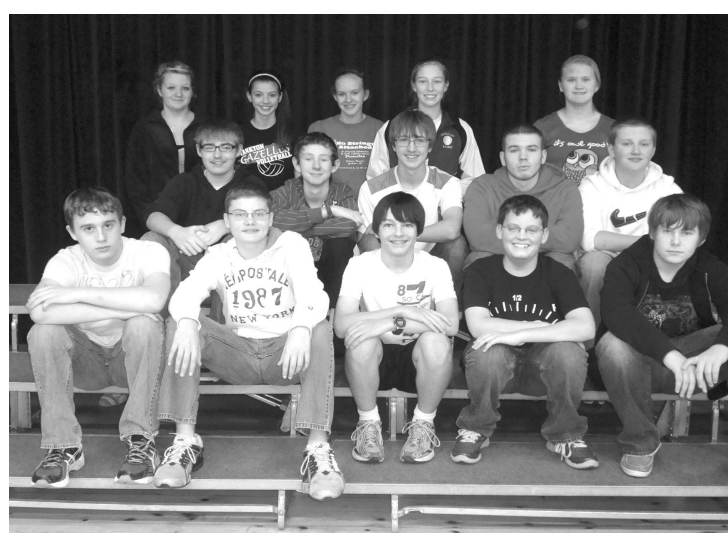
TOM: He's obviously developing a "stop and smell the roses" philosophy, and maybe you can sell him on the fact that he'll be freer to enjoy his surroundings since you'll be watching the road.

RAY: Right. That way, he can take note of ALL the bushes that bloom twice. And all the places where the utilities are marked. Good luck, Gayle. And don't forget to breathe.

Do you really need that truck if you only make one trip to the lumberyard per year? Find out what kind of car NOT to get in Tom and Ray's pamphlet "Should I Buy, Lease, or Steal My Next Car?" Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Next Car, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Yankton Middle School Knowledge Team consist of eighth graders. They are, back row: Sophie McKee, Jacey Anderberg, Kelsey Westerman, Lyndsey Hale and Desirea Sanders. middle row: Ike Johnson, Cole Schlaefli, Hunter Lippert, Ethan Emmerich Rob Marlow. front row: Dylan Grant, Brock Goeden, Ben Rust, Dilyn Tramp and Ian Bruder.

Yankton Middle School Competes In Knowledge Master Open

The Yankton Middle School Knowledge Master team and other middle school teams from South Dakota and the United States participated in the Knowledge Master Open on Dec. 5, 2012. This is a nationwide contest designed to measure the students' academic knowledge. The Yankton team finished 2nd of the 10 middle schools in South Dakota that chose to enter the contest. We also finished 128th among the 508 schools in the United States that chose to enter the contest.

A company named Academic Hallmarks provides the questions used in the contest. The questions are selected from all middle

school academic areas and are designed to stimulate enthusiasm for learning and recognition for academic accomplishment. The contest runs on classroom computers to allow all students the opportunity to compete in a large academic event without the expense of traveling to a central site. An emphasis is placed on speed as well as accuracy in answering the 200 test questions. The coded test results are phoned into Academic Hallmarks and the company tabulates the results to determine the state and national winners.

The Yankton Middle School team is coached by JoAnn Moses.

BIRTHDAYS

FRIEDA BOS

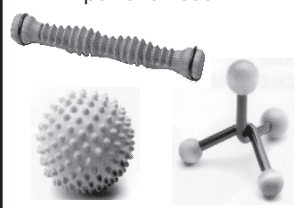


Bos

Frieda Bos, formerly of Yankton, will be celebrating her 80th birthday on Dec. 23, 2012. Greetings may be sent to: 505 N. Eighth St., Apt. 109, Beresford, SD 57004.

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MW Towing Ribbon Cutting

The Yankton Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Committee hosted a ribbon cutting for MW Towing and Automotive Service located at 114 Douglas Ave. Renae Charette, manager and Doug Marquardt, the new owner are AAA approved roadside and towing service for S.D. and N.E. with high quality parts and service repair. They are open M-F 8-5:30 Sat. 9-1 p.m. For more information call them at: (605)668-9177 or (605)260-6TOW.

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