

## Poetry Series

**C R Clark**

**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**

June 2008

**Publisher:**

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

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### **C R Clark (1946)**

Hello, my name is Richard Clark. My wife Elaine, and I have been married for 33 years. Between us we have three children, a girl and two boys, five grandchildren and a great-grandchild on the way. I love my family, my Lord, my church and my country and I hope that my writing will reflect this. I like to consider myself an outdoorsman. I enjoy hunting, fishing, camping, or just exploring forest trails. I enjoy writing poetry about life's experiences. Most of my work will have something to do with family, Outdoor activities and remembering old times. I firmly believe that there is no such thing as a bad poem. Every poem means something to the person who wrote it. It may appeal to me or it may not appeal to me, but that has NOTHING to do with whether or not it is good. For whatever its worth, thats my philosophy on poetry. I do have a personal website that I would invite anyone to visit and comment on. It is my first experience at creating a website and any suggestions on how to improve it would be appreciated. The address is: [www.poeticoutdoors.4t.com](http://www.poeticoutdoors.4t.com)

## **A Brash Hummingbird**

My wife keeps a feeder for her dear hummingbirds  
Outside our window it hangs in the shade  
Hummers refresh themselves sunup till dark  
They sip and they slurp that red hummer kool aid

There's one little hummer, a brash one indeed  
On occasion the feeder went dry for a day  
Flew up to the window, hovered, peeked in  
And scolded my lady for her negligent ways

She mixed up a new batch of red hummer kool aid  
And to hang it up high, she prevailed upon me  
When that brash little hummer returned for his drink  
He bowed through the window to my lady and me

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C R Clark

## **A Coffee And Hickory Nut Break**

The sky was clear that autumn day  
A dried out pile of brush  
Had needed burning for quite some time  
But there'd never been a rush

Let's go outside, I said to Spud  
And burn that old brush heap  
We'll take some coffee with us  
'Cause I'm sure we'll need a break

We were leaning up against a tree  
Little Spud and me  
When I noticed nuts there on the ground  
That had fell from the hickory tree

I wish we had a hammer, Spud  
I'd show you something good  
I'll get it grandpa, he replied  
And off to the house he ran

When he got back we looked around  
And found a large flat stone  
And placed it there beside our tree  
Near the rocks we were sitting on

I placed a nut atop the stone  
And with the hammer, whacked it  
As Spud looked on, it split in two  
And I showed him the meat inside it

I opened up my pocketknife  
And picked the sweet meat out  
Spud liked the taste a lot, he said  
Good thing there was more about

We sat there while the brush heap burned  
We whacked, and picked and drank  
Till the coffee was gone, the fire was out  
And Spud was in need of a nap

I believe that I will never forget  
That wonderful autumn day  
When Spud and I burned a big brush pile  
And took a coffee and hickory nut break

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C R Clark

## **A Lonely Man**

A lonely man in the midst of a crowd  
Is the loneliest man of all  
If only he could forget his pride  
He could make friends of them all

Copyright: C R Clark - 7/4/1981

C R Clark

## **A Place To Pray**

The autumn leaves fell to the ground  
One crisp October day  
As through the forest walked a man  
To find a place to pray

His mind was filled with worldly stuff  
Of problems great and small  
He knew he'd never rest until  
He gave the Lord, them all

The forest welcomed the troubled soul  
To its leafy, splendored halls  
And there in the woods, the man knelt down  
And to the Lord, poured out his heart

There's no better place in all the world  
To be alone with God  
Than in his forest on a cool clear day  
When autumn leaves begin to fall

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C R Clark

## **A Slow, Cool Summer Rain**

Ah, to lounge on a tin roof porch  
As a slow, cool summer rain  
Washes away the gathered dust  
That seems to cover everything  
The garden plants have wilted  
From the stifling, summers heat  
But, they all begin to liven up  
As their roots, the raindrops reach  
As the rain descends from heaven  
And meets the roof of tin  
Its rhythm soothes and comforts  
With its slow hypnotic din  
Like water slowly trickling  
Down a creek bed over stones  
The raindrops on the roof  
Induce a soft euphoric tone  
And then, one's mind may wander  
To another place and time  
And as the rain continues falling  
The earth is nourished and revived

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C R Clark

## **Ain't We Baby**

Ain't we got a good thing going, honey  
Ain't we, ain't we baby  
Ain't we got a fine little pair of young, uns  
Ain't we, ain't we baby  
A cotton top boy and a blue-eyed girl  
Prettiest things in this old world  
Oh Baby, we got a good thing going

We got us a house out in the country  
Got us a yard full of young pine trees  
Got an old hound dog that's full of fleas  
And bushels of love and we're living free  
Oh Baby, we got a good thing going

We're clearing land for a garden spot  
Gonna have a bean and tomater crop  
Raise a couple of hogs, we'll have ham to eat  
And next winter we won't buy groceries  
Oh Baby, we got a good thing going

Ain't we got a good thing going, Honey  
Ain't we, Ain't we Baby  
Ain't we got a fine little pair of young'uns  
Ain't we, Ain't we Baby  
A cotton top boy and a blue-eyed girl  
Prettiest things in this old world  
Oh Baby, we got a good thing going

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C R Clark

## **Bethel's Redemption**

There were trees the size of basketballs that grew from twixt the blocks  
And vines, of varying degrees of life, entwining the hand lain rocks  
And water trickled and sometimes spewed through the copious spouting holes  
So, they told us, "Boys, go clean it off and take care to break no bones."  
And, it was climb boys climb, across the face of them blocks  
Once you get all this tangle off, we'll redeem this pile of rocks.

So, off we went across the face of that vertical thicket, dense  
Swinging power saws and various manual cutting instruments.  
Though all the while we were conscious of the perilous rocks below,  
We cut them oaks and sweet gum trees and dropped `em down the hole.  
And it was balance boys balance, take care to control your feet.  
There's broken bones or likely worse if you slip and follow those trees.

So we cleaned the back of Bethel like the day the blocks were laid,  
And then across the top we cut the vines and brush away.  
On the day that we were done with her, that old dam really shined,  
And they told us, " boys get off her now and we'll spray her down with gunite."  
And it was down boys down, get down off Bethel's rack,  
And, I hope I'm long retired before them vines and trees grow back.

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C R Clark

## **Bucks and Skeeters (A profound postulation)**

On my stand since early morning  
With my smokepole on my lap  
Somethin crawled acrost my forehead  
'Twas a skeeter needin slapped  
So I slapped 'em with my right hand  
Then out the corner of my left eye  
I seen a buck runnin off  
With his flag stuck way up high  
I said dadgum you bloomin skeeter  
You done cost me that big buck  
But I just couldn't set here  
And let a skeeter suck my blood  
Then a thought ocured to me  
I betcha that it's true  
The way I got it figgerd  
Bucks and skeeters must cahoot

Boy, skeeters must be stupid  
'cause they have to give their life  
While the buck runs off into the woods  
Somehow, that don't seem right  
And, what about them skeeters?  
How do they train their young?  
The old ones get killed off  
Before they can teach their sons  
I guess it must be instinct  
It's just born into their psyche  
To help out bucks in danger  
So, they play like kamikazes  
Now, if you don't get my drift  
Don't strive till you lose sleep  
'Cause, all my friends have told me  
My thinking's pretty deep

Copyright: C R Clark -7/26/07

C R Clark

## **Coco**

She was down around the pump house  
When I saw her Sunday morn  
Some knucklehead had dumped her out  
And left her by the road  
She would tag along behind me  
Every time I made a round  
A friendly little pup, she was,  
A fuzzy shade of brown  
I had seen a hundred like her,  
The world is full of knuckleheads,  
Who routinely, dump unwanted pets  
To roam and starve to death  
Never, in the past,  
Had any ever turned my head  
But, something about her touched me  
And I couldn't help myself  
When I got off, I picked her up  
And put her in my truck  
Took her home and made her family  
She's no longer just a mutt

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C R Clark

## **Come Get Me, Lord Jesus**

As a child I used to wonder  
What the Rapture might really be  
When I heard the old folks talk about it  
It always frightened me  
A peculiar thing it somehow seemed  
That would carry off kids  
In the middle of their dreams  
And take them away to, who knows where  
And deprive them of parents  
When they finally got there  
But since I'm grown I realize  
The Rapture, to Christians, is highly prized  
And since I'm a Christian and Jesus is mine  
If raptured today, I never would die  
Now I long for the time, when Jesus will come  
And take me away to his mansion above  
To live in a world where everything's right  
And visit with God and my loved ones on high  
No human wisdom can ever describe  
The way that I feel, what a glorious high  
As I look toward Zion and say with a shout  
"Come get me, Lord Jesus, " my fear has run out

Copyright C R Clark-6/10/81

C R Clark

## **Come On Fellers, Loosen Up**

To the company that supplies our uniforms  
This letter is written to alert and inform  
We don't really like what you've gone and done  
We liked things better like they used to run

Ya'll changed our britches, now we can't breathe  
Traded our "Dickies" for some new blue jeans  
They don't rightly fit, they're way too tight  
When I wear `em, my voice starts to sound real high

Ya'll need to consider who you're dealing with  
We're all grown men, not high school kids  
We don't like bending to be so hard  
We like loose blue jeans not leotards

Come on fellers, won't you help us, please  
Give us back our "Dickies" loose blue jeans  
We don't really care `bout tryin to look "buff"  
Come on fellers, loosen up

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C R Clark

## **Dandy Don**

The groundhog comes each evening  
And forages on the lawn  
Even though he doesn't know it  
I call him Dandy Don

I'd like to tell him of his name  
But, I guess it just can't be  
For, the slightest movement on my part  
And Dandy Don will flee

Two mallards live here on the lake  
They swim from the other shore  
And lounge for hours there on the lawn  
While Dandy Don explores

At times some deer will happen by  
Just passing across the lawn  
With no attention paid, at all  
By the foraging Dandy Don

Why then is he so fearful  
When I just open up the door  
I guess that he, somehow, suspects  
That I'm a carnivore

He wouldn't be so worried  
Even though, I do eat meat  
If he could only understand  
On these feet, I ain't fleet

So, if you ever see me running  
Just hide behind a tree  
And don't look for what I'm chasing  
'Cause something's chasing me

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C R Clark

## Dee, The Young Master's Mare

She was just a new endeavor, maybe about half grown  
But there was "spirit" in her eyes the day the boy brought her home

I thought the new would wear off and his interest soon would fade  
But he never shirked his time with her his dedication never waned

The sun shown on her flaxen mane, in the field, as she romped and played  
And she looked like an Indian pony running free out on the range

The boy fed and stroked her, groomed and talked to her and she knew  
That he really cared about her and so the love between them grew

As, often times it happens, things longed for seem to hide  
And it seemed the time would never come when Dee was old enough to ride

But, if one thing's true in this life, time moves at a natural pace  
We can never speed the process all things have a time and place

When, at last, the time had come and her back could bear the load  
He placed the saddle on her and gently climbed aboard

Though she was somewhat nervous the load did not offend  
It seemed she truly recognized the one who rode her was her friend

Each day they rode the back roads and the trails around the place  
As dreams of competitions began to take on shape

They joined up as "pard'ners" with the "Dark Horse" racing team  
Chuck wagons raced around the track, the competition there was keen

They, two, would chase the wagons as they raced around the track  
They had to cross the finish line before their wagon team could pass

They ran in many races and many times they won  
Their first year in competition, in the state, they were number one

It was wondrous just to watch them as they raced around the track  
This beautiful paint with flowing mane and my son sitting on her back

They took home many prizes, gold buckles, trophies and such  
But, compared to the love between them, those things didn't matter much

They say when you're on the bottom the only way to go is up  
Sadly, the opposite is sometimes true when you're already on the top

One day Dee started limping and daily it got worse  
There was no apparent reason for this dreadful, sudden curse

It was saddening just to watch her try to walk on hooves so sore  
And then she lay down on the ground, she could stand and walk no more

The "Doc, " again was summoned, his words were "chilling" as icy rain

He said if Dee were his horse, he wouldn't let her bear the pain

With heavy heart and defeated gaze the boy then acquiesced  
And, as the potion was prepared, his heart sank in his chest

The boy then dropped down to his knees and placed his face against his friend  
In that moment there was silence as the potion was put in

As the pain eased in her body, as if whispered in the wind,  
It seemed an almost audible voice said, simply, "thank you, my friend"

Copyright: C.R. Clark 3/24/07

C R Clark

## **First Americans**

Thru the glass of my perception  
Looking back in spans of time  
Beyond all that's in my memory  
Back before grandfather's time  
Before the declaration  
Made our independence real  
Before the pilgrims came to Plymouth  
Even before Columbus sailed  
I can see them in the forests  
In the valleys and the hills  
Living as they had for ages  
By their wits and by their wills  
This land was not discovered  
By explorers from abroad  
But by the American Indian  
Who had always called it home

Copyright C R Clark-7/25/07

C R Clark

## **For The Good Of Mortal Man**

Originally written as a song: Tune 'Because He Lives'

There was a man who walked the earth  
Filling men with love, doing good for all  
He was sacrificed, nailed to a cruel cross  
He gave his life for the good of mortal man

This man was Jesus, this man was Jesus  
He is the true and living Son of God  
He gave his life as an atonement  
For the sin, for the sin of mortal man

They nailed him to a cross at Calvary  
They pierced his side and mocked him too  
They cursed at him, until he died there  
He gave his life for folks like you and me

This man was Jesus, this man was Jesus  
He is the true and living Son of God  
He gave his life as an atonement  
For the sin, for the sin of mortal man

He suffered there to pay a sin debt  
Made by a world, lost and undone  
He prayed to God, to forgive his enemies  
And then he died, three days later, rose again

This man was Jesus, this man was Jesus  
He is the true and living Son of God  
He gave his life as an atonement  
For the sin, for the sin of mortal man

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C R Clark

## **Forever Mom, I Love You Too**

You gave me life, you gave me love  
You were God's gift from above  
First to Dad, then to brothers, three  
You were God's first gift to me

You taught us how to live and love  
You sought directions from above  
To bring your boys up straight and true  
'Cause you felt we were his gifts to you

Dad used a belt when the need arose  
But, that was not what upset me most  
T'was when upon your face, I'd gaze  
And see disappointment on your face

But, no matter what, I always knew  
Your love would be forever true  
And I think you know, I hope you do  
Forever, mom, I love you too

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C R Clark

## **Ghost Critter Creeps**

Ghost Critter creeps  
In the middle of the night  
Molesting my sleep  
Causing me a fright  
Out on the ground  
Running around  
Rattling leaves  
Making all kind of sounds  
Flashlight beam  
Can't find him in the night  
He manages to keep  
Just ahead of the light  
He only comes out  
In the midst of my dreams  
Disrupting my sleep  
Seems to be his main scheme  
At first I was startled  
And just had to see  
What brand of critter  
Was harassing me  
Year after year  
The same thing occurs  
He must train his offspring  
To carry on his curse  
But to this day  
I never have seen  
Just what breed of scoundrel  
The ghost critter be  
But, it's gone on so long now  
In a new light, I see  
The ghost critter's presence  
Seems normal to me  
So, now when I'm awakened  
In the middle of the night  
I just roll over and smile  
All's well  
The ghost critter's back

Copyright: CR. Clark 11/28/05

C R Clark

## **Girls Look Great In Camo**

The debutantes seem all the rage  
Their beauty is without question  
As portraits spread the society page  
Of our local, quaint newspaper

They look elegant in their designer gowns  
Their hairstyles are impeccable  
And, as well, their carriage and demeanor  
At the annual spring cotillion

The young men strive as they vie for favor  
And a waltz with these young ladies  
Designers show their works of art  
Being worn by these elegant maidens

But, there's another style in fashion's thread  
And that's the style for which I'd opt  
It's known by various colorful names  
Like Woodland, Realtree, and Mossy Oak

And, I know, if ever these lovely maids  
Would shed those courtly designer gowns  
And don some camo and hunting boots  
Their awesome beauty would reign, renown

Now some will call me a "tacky" sort  
Or impugn my raising and say I'm an oaf  
But, "what the heck, I'm a proud redneck"  
And girls do look great in camo

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C R Clark

## **Granddad Had No Teeth**

Granddad couldn't eat the crust  
From Grandmother's crispy cornbread  
'Cause Granddad didn't have no teeth  
And had to "gum" whatever he "et"  
But, it all worked out, fine as "frog hair"  
He'd dig the middle out  
And leave the crispy crust for me  
When I was at their house

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C R Clark

## **Grandma Sang A Special**

Grandma sang a special in Montgomery  
In the church where her youngest preached the word  
He turned the tape recorder on and caught it  
And still today, my Grandma can be heard

Grandma sang "I know who holds tomorrow"  
And she sang it loud for everyone to hear  
Today my Grandma's singing it for Jesus  
'Cause he held a place for her in heaven's choir

Grandma sang a special in Montgomery  
And every time I hear that tape today  
If I shut my eyes and listen to it closely  
It seems like she is right here in this place

Grandma sang "I know who holds tomorrow"  
And she sang it loud for everyone to hear  
Today my Grandma's singing it for Jesus  
'Cause he held a place for her in heaven's choir

Grandma sings her specials now in heaven  
And I'm sure that all who hear her say Amen!  
I look forward to the day I'll be in heaven  
And, in person, I'll hear Grandma sing again

Grandma sang "I know who holds tomorrow"  
And I know he holds tomorrow for me too  
One day he'll come back and take me with him  
'Cause he held a place for me in heaven too

Grandma sang "I know who holds tomorrow"  
And she sang it loud for everyone to hear  
Today my Grandma's singing it for Jesus  
'Cause he held a place for her in heaven's choir

Copyright: C R Clark -9/13/08

C R Clark

## **Great day on the stand**

What a morning  
Wonderful morning  
Perfect in every way  
Cloudy sky, fifty degrees  
And just a little wisp of wind

What a morning  
Beautiful morning  
Perfect in every way  
No rain, no biting bugs  
And just a short hike to my stand

What a morning  
Glorious morning  
Perfect in every way  
Except, the deer, they stayed away  
But hey, it's been a splendid day

Copyright: C R Clark 12/02/05

C R Clark

## **Greener Grass**

I was standing by the river  
Gazing to the other side  
The grass appeared much, greener there  
The sun, much brighter, shined

But, the river, it was mighty  
Much too deep and wide to span  
But, I felt a longing in my heart  
To dwell in that fair land

My friends said, they thought me mad  
It was just another scene  
No better and no worse than here  
No more peaceful, nor serene

But, I was steadfast in my dream  
And began to build a boat  
That would carry me and all my goods  
To that lovely, distant shore

I cast off on a balmy morn  
And arrived at eventide  
As I set my feet on that new sod  
I could feel my fervor rise

At daybreak, as I walked around  
This new land to survey  
My heart sank, as I became aware  
'Twas not unlike my former place

As I stood there by the river  
Gazing to the other side  
The grass appeared much greener there  
The sun, much brighter, shined

Copyright C R Clark-2/27/2008

C R Clark

## **Hang Gliding**

To plunge from high on summit's peak  
And ride the current, swift  
Survey the earth in sweeping view  
As, with the morning clouds, I drift

To look the eagle in the eye  
While soaring heaven's blue  
And float on silent wafts of air  
Blind to common hullabaloo

It would be grand to hang below  
The glider as I tour the sky  
And so I would if I just could  
Acquire sufficient nerve to try

© C R Clark-5/18/2008

C R Clark

## Hog Killing Time

It always happened in the fall of the year  
When the temperature dropped and left a chill in the air  
We'd pile fire wood round the old wash pots  
Fill 'em up with water and get it real hot  
The hog was stuck while still in the pen  
Then hoisted up and laid on a sled  
With a horse or tractor we'd pull'm on up  
As near as we could to the hot wash pots  
We'd cover'm with tow sacks to hold in the heat  
And scald'm real good to make the hair release  
I remember that wet, musty smell in the air  
As we used sharp knives to scrape off the hair  
Once the hair was scraped off that side  
We'd flip'm over and do the rest of the hide  
Then the men folk would hoist'm back up  
And dropp out the innards in a big wash tub  
Then they'd let'm down in the bed of the truck  
And take'm to the women and they'd cut'm up  
Into hams and bacon and chops and ribs  
And little pieces to run through the sausage mill  
There was a lot more fat than the sausage required  
So they'd put it in a wash pot that set on the fire  
They'd render it down and dip the cracklin's all out  
Then, you know what was left? A pot full of lard  
They'd put it in buckets then for goodness sakes  
Use it to fry taters and make cornbread and cakes  
Weren't none of that crisco or peanut oil  
Like modern folks get when they go to the store  
Just good ole lard, one hundred percent country  
As 'merican as apple pie, 'lasses, and cow salve butter  
Then the men folk would take them bacon slabs an ham  
Out to the smoke house where they'd rub 'em all down  
With sugar cure and then they'd have to set  
For, what seemed like forever, 'fore they could be et  
But once they was ready, what a treat that would be  
If I live to be a hundred I'll never forget  
Them sugar cured hams and bacon, wooyes  
By then, it was generally getting towards dark  
'cause we might'a been working up three or four hogs  
We'd take all the sausage meat into the house  
And get the old hand cranked sausage mill out  
We'd take turns a crankin 'cause yer arms'd give out  
But that old mill jest kept spittin it out  
When we got it all ground, it was seasoning time  
And 'course we had to test it, 'cause it had to be right  
Mix in some salt, red pepper and sage  
Then fry up a batch and we'd all have a taste  
Us young'uns knew we was in fer a treat  
'cause fresh kilt hog meat jest can't be beat  
I'd looked forward to this part all day  
'cause, I loved testing sausage that old country way  
I can see Pa or my uncle standing there at the stove

They'd fry a batch up and say what does it need  
A little more pepper and a little more sage  
Then fry up some more and we'd have another taste  
You just can't find great sausage anymore  
You sure can't buy it when you go to the store  
They call theirs country but that's really a stretch  
'cause it don't compare to the real thing that much  
Could be why the store bought just don't stand a chance  
Is 'cause it jest don't have the whole 'sperience  
I love to remember all the great things we did  
A way back yonder when I was a kid  
Times like this have pretty much gone by  
Young'uns today don't understand why  
We often reflect on the things that we've done  
And wish we could have another day in the sun  
They think we're old fogies 'cause we often do pine  
For things we remember like hog killing time

Copyright C R Clark-4/20/07

C R Clark

## **I Love You, I Love You Too**

I love you  
I love you, too  
Do these terms mean the same?  
I'm not sure they really do  
You see, one term is a reply  
The other must be said first  
It would not sound correct, at all  
To say, I love you too, first  
It's also a somewhat lesser risk  
To reply, I love you too  
Because, I love you, leaves you open  
And could, maybe, be refused  
But, if, I love you, is really true  
Then go ahead and say it  
For if your favor is not returned  
That really doesn't change it  
Love and romance are not the same  
Real love is so much deeper  
Like the love of parents for a child  
Like Jesus loves us sinners  
Real love requires no like response  
But stands all by itself  
Does not demand agreeing minds  
It is in and of itself  
But if, alas, you falter  
And the other says, I love you  
It would not be incorrect to say  
I love you, and leave off the too

Copyright C R Clark-4/8/07

C R Clark

## **I Revel In This Moment**

Even after all these married years,  
I still love waking up next to you  
You're lying on your side, on my left arm,  
Head resting on my shoulder  
And your arm stretched across my chest,  
Our legs are intertwined  
I can feel the rhythm of your breathing  
And your warm breath against my skin  
Even though you are still asleep  
Your closeness overwhelms my senses  
I have been awake for an hour  
But, I don't want to move  
For then, the moment would be broken  
And I revel in this moment

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C R Clark

## **I Search For My Love**

In the early morning  
I search for my love  
By the stream and the meadow  
I call her name  
I look on the mountain  
And down in the dell  
I search for my love  
But to no avail  
She's hiding, she's hiding  
The whippoorwills say  
Your love is in hiding  
She's running away  
She ran to the woods  
When it barely was light  
The poor thing was crying  
She had been all night  
Go back to your bed  
And wait for her there  
Try not to worry  
And do not despair  
Your love will come home  
For her true love is you  
She'll come to your bed  
When her malady's through

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C R Clark

## **I Talk To Jesus**

When I'm lost and feeling lonely  
And I think that no one cares  
When the day closes in around me  
And my eyes well up with tears  
When my friends all desert me  
And my family don't understand,  
Self esteem goes down to zero  
And my hope turns to despair  
I talk to Jesus  
Jesus talks back to me  
He shows me the good things  
That I've been too blind to see  
He shows me I still have friends  
They were really there all the time  
He shows me, my twisted life  
Was mostly, just in my mind  
I talk to Jesus  
And he gives me peace within  
He gave me a new life  
Now he wants to use that life  
Though, I always wonder  
Just what he sees in me,  
I guess I already know  
It's just that he loves me

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C R Clark

## **I'm hooked on PH (For Lucianne Fasolo)**

Many verses, I've scribbled down  
O'er the years and I have found  
They, mostly, sat on shelves, unread  
By anyone, but me

I longed to share them with other folks  
But, when the time came, I would choke  
I felt they didn't care to read  
My thoughts in poetry

Then, one day I was exploring  
The web for works of well known poets  
I stumbled on a site, refreshing  
Poemhunter. Com

I joined up and published ten  
Of poems I had already penned  
Then, before much time had passed  
I received my first comment

I was thrilled, to say the least  
That someone out there had noticed me  
And actually took the time to say  
I enjoyed your poetry

I think that I will ne'er forget  
The first comment, my work would get  
On PH, I'm now "hooked" and thank  
The lovely Lucianne

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C R Clark

## **Illumination**

The radiant Sun brings light to the day  
And chases away night's darkened skies  
Revealing beauty that was hidden therein  
Illuminating God's marvelous design

But, the night is also blessed with its light  
That gleams in the dark, ethereal expanse  
The heavenly bodies that glimmer so bright  
Illumine the blue with their warm radiance

Our learning requires an additional light  
Imparted by those trained to edify  
Our minds with essential and cultural facts  
To illumine an, otherwise, uninformed life

Then, there's the light most special of all  
The light of the world, the redemption of man  
The Son is the light that releases from sin  
And illumines the soul as no other light can

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C R Clark

## **In Stealth I Sit, In Forest Deep**

In stealth I sit, in forest, deep  
Ere the light of morning  
As clouds collect, my spirit craves  
The shower, fast approaching

A cloak of olive casts facade  
Amorphous, I appear  
No form, but dry, beneath the folds  
To bask in heaven's joyful tears

Fedora's brim beneath the hood,  
From eyes, the drib, restrains  
And clamor fades to inner peace  
With the patter of the rain

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C R Clark

## **Joker**

When my wife and me got married  
She had this little dog  
He didn't like me none too much  
He was rotten to the core  
He would "pee" my hat and shoes  
Anytime they were left out  
He considered me an interloper  
Living in HIS house  
He'd race me to the bedroom  
Every night when we'd retire  
And bury up between the sheets  
And I'd have to drag him out  
More than once I told him  
"Joker, " this ain't gonna work  
I married her, she' my wife now  
You can't sleep with her no more

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C R Clark

## **Knave Of The Watery World**

He sits atop his castle wall  
To observe his lowly serfs  
And demands of them by word and deed  
His lordship to observe

He imagines that his mind is great  
A brilliant, shining light  
Ore shading all the serfs who dwell  
In the shadow of his might

He is a giant, in his own eyes  
But all around him know  
He altered when good fortune came  
His arrogance, great, did grow

His proud position, suits him not  
His prowess sadly lacks  
And, somewhere deep within his mind  
He abhors this well known fact

He rightly fears the day, perhaps  
His ineptness comes to light  
So, conjured aspersions, he doth cast  
On any serf in sight

In truth, a viper, his lordship be  
A perfidious, scheming churl  
Who thrives from work of better men  
This knave of the watery world

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C R Clark

## **Little Dude's Treasure**

Little Dude and his Little Wife  
Settle down to married life  
He goes to work, comes home to spouse  
They smooch and cuddle, play a little house  
Paint a shanty, shoot a "nanny"  
Cook a deer steak, just like Granny  
Take a tom, a squirrel or two  
Make a pot of rabbit stew  
Single life ain't even missed  
'Cause life don't get no better'n this

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C R Clark

## Marbles (Circa '54)

Recess time out on the schoolyard  
A circle is drawn on the ground  
In the center will rest the stakes of the game  
On top of a long thin mound

Four young lads are gathered around  
In their pockets they're "diggin" deep  
Each produces three shiny orbs  
There's Larry, Tommy, Freddy and Me

The orbs are lined up atop the mound  
We draw straws to see who's first  
Then each of us retrieves our "Taw"  
Our most prized marble on earth

Larry's Taw is "The Solid Black"  
Tommy's, "The Old Red and White"  
Freddy's is "The Steelie"  
And mine, the esteemed "Cat's Eye"

I was never that fond of football  
I Loved "Round Ball", but had no gift  
At baseball, I could "hold my own"  
But, at marbles, I was deft

I went home that day, "a winner"  
My pockets filled with the stakes  
I'd won everything except their "Taws"  
But those I would never take

When I got home, I realized  
This lad was in trouble deep  
When my mom saw my bulging pockets  
She knew I'd been "playing for keeps"

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C R Clark

## Me And Lew

As my mind goes drifting backwards  
I remember happy times  
In the summer, when school was out  
And my time was really mine  
I'd go out to my Grandpa's farm  
And meet up with Cousin Lew  
We'd make tracks for the mountaintop  
And stay till day was through

When we'd get up to the mountaintop  
We'd be in another world  
Sometimes we'd meet with Wyatt Earp  
Cause he was a friend of ours  
We'd clean up towns, fight Indian wars  
And watch the buffalo roam  
And our tails would be a'draggin  
When we finally headed home

We'd get up in the morning  
And we'd head down to the creek  
Shed our clothes and jump right in  
Let the fishes bite our feet  
We'd drag the alligators out  
By pulling on their tails  
We'd stomp their heads and  
Leave them bruised and bloody on the trail

Yea, we was tough,  
No doubt about it  
Weren't a man alive or a beast around  
That could give us half a fight  
Cause we was tough  
And respected  
The good folks loved us dearly, but  
The crooks all hated our guts

Down the creek, at the sorghum hole  
Is where the pirate ships would come  
They'd raid and pillage the nearby towns  
And steal kids from their homes  
Blackbeard was their captains name  
He was vicious, through and through  
But his heart would turn to jelly  
When he'd think of me and Lew

We'd wait for him in ambush  
When he'd come back from the town  
We'd whip his men and tie 'em up  
Then we'd run Blackbeard down  
We'd catch him just as he was about  
To get on board his ship  
And he would start to tremble

At the thought of getting whipped

Me and Lew would flip a coin  
To see who'd get him first  
It didn't make much difference  
Cause both of us was tough  
We'd knock him down, twist his legs  
And bust him in the face  
And he'd know he'd had a beatin'  
When we finally let him lay

Yea, we was tough  
No doubt about it  
Weren't a man alive or a beast around  
That could give us half a fight  
Cause we was tough  
And respected  
The good folks loved us dearly, but  
The crooks all hated our guts

Well, that went on for several years  
Till we were about thirteen  
That was when we realized  
That, girls looked good in jeans  
Our entire line of thinking changed  
It seemed we'd been all wrong  
Those day were so confusing  
Cause we'd been tough for so long

One day while we was walking  
Down the road, shooting the breeze  
We ran into a couple of girls  
And they were wearing jeans  
Their hair was long and silky  
They were beautiful to see  
Their britches legs were rolled up  
They was wading in the creek

We smiled at them and they smiled back  
Then one began to speak  
She said, we don't like fighters  
We like peaceful folk, you see  
We know your reputation  
How your' fighting all the time  
So just keep on a'walking  
Cause we won't give you the time

Ma'am, we ain't tough, no, we are lovers  
Why, listening to little birdies sing  
Is what we like to do  
When the sun goes down and the crickets chirp  
Our hearts just leap for joy

And, if you'll go walking with us  
You'll find out we're gentle boys

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C R Clark

## Mose And Bonnie Lee

Way back in the mountain and beyond bread creek  
Where muscadines hang from the hardwood trees  
The coyotes howl all through the night  
And backbones tingle when the catamount cries.  
Where the mountain's hard and mighty unforgivin'  
And, where the faint of heart got no bus'ness bein'.  
Old "Mose" the hermit lived by hisself  
In a ratty old shack on the mountain's shelf.  
He didn't like people and he didn't like towns.  
He didn't like it when folks from the valley came 'round.  
But, once in awhile down the mountain he'd go  
To get salt and meal at the gen'ral store.

'Twas on one of these trips his life made a change  
When he was headin home through a drivin rain.  
A little walker pup, soaked plum to the bone  
Had been dropped and abandoned on that lonely old road.  
With the goods on his back and his head bowed down,  
He paid little notice to the rain soaked hound.  
When he finally got home he was soppin wet,  
So he pulled a blanket up around his head,  
And stood by the fire to try and get warm,  
Then he saw somp'n movin outside in the yard.  
That little wet pup was standin out in the rain  
Starin at Mose through the wind'r pane.

Now, it weren't like Mose to care much 'bout nuthin,  
But, fer some odd reason he swung the door open  
And that little hound pup, not one bit shy,  
Come saunterin in and laid down by the fire.  
Somp'n 'bout that pup touched old Mose' heart.  
He sat hisself down and propped his feet on the hearth.  
He said, "pup, this mountain man is pore indeed,  
Hope you can make do with some cornbread and beans."  
When the pup had finished her "pore man" feed,  
She curled herself up 'ginst the old Man's feet.  
Old Mose couldn't 'member when he'd felt so pleased  
And he called the little pup "Miss Bonnie Lee."

Now, Mose and Bonnie Lee got to be real tight;  
When she'd grow'd up she made a powerful sight.  
She was big fer a hound and her shoulders was wide,  
She had somp'n 'sides walker blood to give 'er that size.  
She was strong as a Dane and she could run all night;  
She'd whup'd ever coyote that ever come by.  
But, there was this one time they was huntin the hill,  
Hadn't been fer Bonnie, old Mose'd been kill't.  
A big old catamount jumped from a tree  
And knocked the old mountain man down to his knees.  
Bonnie was on 'em like a flash of lightning  
You could hear growls and cat screams all over that mountain

When Bonnie first landed on that big mountain cat,  
She grabbed a mouthful of fur at the back of its neck  
And lifted that catamount right off of its feet  
And they fought as they rolled down the hill to the creek.  
When they landed in the water, Bonnie Lee started shakin  
And the skin on that old cougar's neck started breakin.  
She shook the cat loose and it whirled in the air  
And she was left standin with a mouthful of lion hair.  
But, that old cat'd had all that it wanted  
When it's feet hit the ground, it was scat'in and squallin.  
Bonnie's hound instinct said she oughta give chase  
But, Mose called her back, He didn't want to tempt fate.

Up there on the mountain, as the years went by,  
The light was gettin dim in the old man's eyes.  
He'd always loved goin up to the crest;  
Seemed like that's where he always felt best.  
He'd stare in wonder at what God had created  
And tell Bonnie, "I 'spect we're the reason he made it."  
But, seemed like lately he'd been stumblin a lot  
So, Bonnie would lead'm past the blowdowns and rocks.  
The old man knew their time was runnin low  
And worried 'bout Bonnie if he's the first one to go.  
So, he ask the Lord, "if I'm the first one to leave,  
Won't you please watch over Miss Bonnie Lee? "

Way back in the mountain and beyond bread creek,  
Where muscadines hang in the hardwood trees,  
The coyotes howl all through the night  
And backbones tingle when the catamount cries.  
Where the mountain's hard and mighty unforgivin'  
And, where the faint of heart got no bus'ness bein.'  
A blind old hermit, on a cold winter's night,  
Sits by the fireplace in the glowin light,  
Thanks the Lord for all the blessins he's had,  
In partic'lar the best dog a man ever had.  
He props his legs up to warm his feet  
And, gently, pats the head of Miss Bonnie Lee.

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C R Clark

## **My Granddad's Porch**

My Granddads porch was awesome  
Though really quite austere  
A place where neighbors sat and talked  
Most any time of year  
A place that's in my memory  
From a better time, I'm sure  
I don't recall great happenings  
But I always felt secure  
We'd sit there in the morning  
Watch the cars and trucks go by  
And every neighbor, as they passed  
Would throw their hand up high  
After supper in the evening  
To the porch we would retire  
And watch a brilliant sunset  
Form a watercolor sky  
The tree frogs and the crickets  
Would croon their soothing trill  
But my favorite sound of evening  
Was the call of the whippoorwill  
We'd go to bed quite early  
I'd sleep soundly through the night  
And wake to the aroma  
Of breakfast cooking at sunrise  
As I think back upon this time  
I often mellow out  
And wonder why it takes so long  
To learn what really counts  
I would truly love to go back  
And relive this one more time  
But the only way I've found, that works  
Is to live it in my mind

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C R Clark

## **Ode to Baldness**

Heads that shine are "oh so fine"  
And mostly trouble free  
No hair to fly when wind is high  
They're always slick and neat

No hairspray or Brylcreem to buy  
No brushes or pocket combs  
And many ladies, I've heard it said,  
Are fond of the old chrome dome

That must be why so many these days  
Full heads of hair will shave  
But, you can't shave hair that isn't there  
I got mine the natural way

Now, you men of poetic métier  
Whose hair has taken leave  
Just write a verse if you'd care to link  
With the bald headed poets' league

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C R Clark

## **Ode to My Wife**

In a world of many wonders  
I ne'er expect to see  
A lass who'll hold my fancy  
As bountifully as thee

You came to me in springtime  
And now it's nearing fall  
Our autumn time together  
Should be the best of all

The little ones are grown now  
With young ones of their own  
And even those are at the age  
To be out on their own

One day there'll be a new crop  
Of wee ones coming on  
They'll bring their hugs and kisses  
To "Great" Memaw and Pepaw

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C R Clark

## **Odie Bought The Farm**

Odie bought the farm today  
Now we can be at ease  
No more to be awakened  
By his odorous release

James Robert cried when Odie left  
Gigantic tears of glee  
And even Fatso joined the mirth  
As Odie left the scene

The air is so much cleaner now  
And life is better far  
For all of us here on the hill  
Since Odie bought the farm

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C R Clark

## **Old Dobber**

Old Dobber wandered in one day  
Don't know, from whence, he came  
He wore a ragged collar  
But it didn't bear a name  
We all began to feed him  
So he gladly stayed around  
We watched the paper every day  
And read the lost and found  
It was strange no one was looking  
For a dog that could shake hands  
A dog, that if you asked him too  
Would roll over and play dead  
But, it seemed he chose to stay here  
It is here he's made his bed  
I guess he's found a home with us  
So we'll try to keep him fed

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C R Clark

## **Perfect Camo (Haiku)**

New fawn lay so still  
A coyote passing nearby  
Never had a clue

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C R Clark

## **PH, To Me**

When I joined the ranks of poets  
At PH a few weeks hence  
I found a group of people  
Whom I now consider friends

Though, as a poet, I suspect,  
I'll ne'er be thought renowned  
Still I love to show my work  
Where it's seen the world around

This site has been a boon to me,  
Writing more than I used to,  
And I think, by reading other bards  
My own work's been improved

I see this site as a privilege  
And, one not to be abused  
When angry tensions oft arise  
It leaves me quite confused

Each item I submit in verse  
Though meaningful to me  
I suspect that, not, to all who read  
Twill be their cup of tea

At times, much better poets  
Than I, their work, submit  
And even though, I know it's great  
I just can't "get into" it

But if, alas, I take offense  
At values, different than my own  
I, simply, note the poet's name  
Click the mouse and move along

Most welcome bard's suggestions  
How to improve their poetry  
It's a shame that some let tempers flair  
Just because they disagree

If a rude and contentious poet  
Should offend enough, on site  
Their work, no longer, would be read  
Which would be their ultimate price

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C R Clark

## **Phantasmagoria**

I had a dream and you were there  
In lace, with flowers, in your hair  
Your beauty shown and lit the place  
A constant smile was on your face  
You were so young and full of life  
And you had agreed to be my wife  
The scene was set, the guests arrived  
The preacher said, "You may kiss your bride"  
But, when I turned and saw your face  
Some other man was in my place  
And I was standing on the side  
As you were gazing into his eyes  
Then, when you walked away with him  
I felt my heart would surely rend  
But, just as I was near despair  
Then, I awoke and you were there

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C R Clark

## Poetry

Poetry is the thoughts I have  
I write them down for all to see  
Some will like them, some will not  
But, they all hold some import for me  
The subject may be love or sports  
Pitching woo or riding a horse  
Or about hunting or fishing with worms  
Or, just, some silly, rhyming verse  
It may be truth, it may be tale  
It may be true for someone else  
But, written as if it were about me  
It's not a lie, its poetry

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C R Clark

## Quick Retorts

Very often, when I've been in a group  
Of folks who enjoy making smart remarks  
Not for maliciousness, it's all in fun  
But, still, one needs a quick retort

For me, I'll usually think of one  
'Bout fifteen minutes after everyone's gone  
And wonder "now why didn't I say that"  
But, by then, it's too late, they've already gone

This one old boy that I'm around a lot  
Seems always ready with a smart remark  
It's not very often he ever gets stopped  
But, one got him good with a quick retort

It was when this fellow comes back to work  
From his honeymoon with a great big grin  
Old "Smarty" got 'em cornered in the crowd and asked  
"How many times on your first night, friend?"

Now, the boy's face turned strawberry red  
And old "Smarty" figured, he'd gave him a start  
But once he got over the initial jolt  
He said "two times, Smarty" and he stuck his chest out

Old "Smarty" reared back and said, "on my wedding night,  
Me and my wife, twelve times, we went at it"  
The boy, straight faced, and without hesitation  
Said, "well, I reckon my wife just wasn't used to it"

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C R Clark

## **Retirement**

At last, it's here  
Long awaited, anticipated  
Dreamed about and planned for  
And so meets two opposing emotions  
Elation in the joy of the moment  
And trepidation in the idea  
Of, suddenly, being  
Unemployed

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C R Clark

## **Salvation Is Forever**

If any sin could be great enough  
To cause one to fall from grace  
Nobody, but God, would be in Heaven  
They'd all be in the other place

Salvation that will not cover your sin  
Has a value that's very small  
If you could live your life without any sin  
You would need no Salvation at all

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C R Clark

## **Seems Natural To Me To Be Drawn To The Wild**

Seems natural to me to be drawn to the wild  
To get high on breathing the crystal clean air  
To soar with the hawk in the clear azure sky  
Or to fish in the stream with the wild grizzly bear

The wapiti grazes the verdant hillside  
At home and at ease in the thin mountain air  
And, has never so much as, wished on a star  
To be anywhere else, in the world, but up there

And down in the valley the antelope roam  
And feed on the fruits of the green, grassy lea  
The Seal, the Walrus, the Penguin, and Whale  
Are at home in the chill of the cold arctic sea

And down in the Amazon jungle's midst  
There, primitive people, in nature, survive  
They live all their lives in their rain forest home  
Depending on, just, what the forest provides

Though I'm not equipped to live life as these do  
In my mind I can travel and go where I please  
I can run with the caribou, swim with the whale  
And swing on the vines in the Amazon's trees

It seems natural to me to be drawn to the wild  
To treasure the bounty that nature provides  
To appreciate beauty, wherever it breathes  
And savor how nature seasons our lives

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C R Clark

## Shaking The Boat

It was in the summer of '79  
Our reels were loaded with brand new line  
Me and Clarence and my "cotton top" son  
Went out on the lake to have some fun  
Now, the Conway Lake is full of stumps  
When you go through the water, there's lots of bumps  
Sometimes you hang up and there's nothing to do  
But, start shaking the boat till you finally get loose  
We had just started out toward the middle of the lake  
When we veered to the left and got out of the lane  
Then, sure enough we ran up on a stump  
And there we sat, on the stump, we were stuck  
Grabbing the sides of the boat, I said  
Hold onto your hats and don't lose your heads  
Having said that, I started shaking the boat  
I wasn't worried, I knew it would float  
But, my crew turned pale and started to sing  
Have you gone crazy? You'll cause us to sink  
It's the only way, I said, with a grin  
Once we get loose, we can cast off again  
We shook and we grunted, we moaned and we groaned  
And we finally got loose from the stump we were on  
I started the motor and we pattered away  
Hoping no one had seen us shaking that way  
We hadn't gone far till we started to cast  
After awhile the crew's color came back  
We cast and we reeled but the fish wouldn't bite  
We took a vote and decided to try a new site  
A "fishy" looking spot toward the opposite shore  
But about half way there, a stump, we ran over  
We were hung up solid out there in the lake  
So we all grabbed the boat and started to shake  
This time the crew took it all in stride  
And when we shook loose, they both smiled with pride  
So we motored on over to the spot we had seen  
And anchored the boat; the fishing looked "mean"  
We cast and we cranked till our arms were give out  
Then we finally declared "this place is fished out"  
Our success with the fish didn't get any better  
But at finding them stumps, there ain't any greater  
Than me and Clarence and my "cotton top" Son  
We hung up on a hundred, if we hung up on one  
When we finally decided we'd had enough  
I started the motor and we started to putt  
Across the lake, going back to the truck  
The crew was stationed to watch for stumps  
The Son in the middle and Clarence in front  
By now, they were used to shaking off stumps  
When they saw one coming, they weren't bothered much  
When one would appear, they would grab hold and shake  
But, to me, in advance, not a word would they say  
They'd shake to the left and shake to the right

And I had to hold on with all of my might  
They'd have shaken me out of the boat, I admit  
If we hadn't got back to the dock when we did  
For a better day, we could never have wished  
Success is not measured by number of fish  
Time spent with family is worth any cost  
The memories of this trip will never be lost

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C R Clark

## **Smiling Eyes**

Smiling Eyes  
Looking up at me,  
From the face of a thirty eight inch boy  
Touching me  
With magic, only love can comprehend  
Questioning  
And stirring mixed emotions in my soul  
Can I teach him  
All the things he needs to know  
Or will I fail  
And will he love me  
Just as much when he grows up  
As he does now  
But, I know when I look into those smiling eyes  
They don't comprehend the meaning  
In the words I have to say  
But, I hope, they realize  
How much I love those smiling eyes

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C R Clark

## **Solitude**

In the autumn forest,  
Hushed, serene  
I tread  
A dim, meandering trail,  
Absorbed  
In contemplative mood,  
And devour  
The very soul of nature  
Blessed, peaceful  
Solitude

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C R Clark

## **Springtime Meadow**

Downey, glistening petals  
Quiver in springs faint breeze  
Borne high by slender shafts  
Of emerald hue  
As I survey  
This once common meadow  
I am awed  
By it's springtime beauty  
A magnificent blanket of daffodils  
Within this flaxen host  
A new colt at his mother's side  
Attempts to follow  
As she slowly moves away  
But, his wobbly legs give way  
And he falls  
He rests there for a while  
Sheltered  
In this golden sea

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C R Clark

## **Springtime's Coming**

Everything is turning green  
Spring is just around the bend  
Birds are singing everywhere  
And Sonya's got a cold

There's a red bird on the patio  
Sun's a'shining, clouds'll have to go  
Cat's a'sneaking through the underbrush  
And Joker colored a shoe

Yes Springtime's coming  
With all of it's irony  
Sunshine and common colds  
Flu bugs and swimming holes  
Springtime's coming  
With picnic's and tornadoes  
Sunburns and fishing poles  
Won't you hurry up Spring

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C R Clark

## **Success**

Success is measured,  
Not by wealth  
Nor by position or fame  
And not by power  
Or pride in self  
And not by size of gain,  
It's being truly happy  
with what you have  
Whatever that may be  
Success is being  
content, with God  
as the center of your family

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C R Clark

## Testimony

In the early hours of morning, I was driving around the town  
Going nowhere special, just couldn't make myself lay down  
My mind was deep in turmoil such, as I had never known  
I'd made a mess of everything my self-esteem was gone

I had never felt this low before, tormented in my soul  
By my own guilt and other things that were out of my control  
It seemed I had a heavy weight intent to drag me down  
If I could not, soon, free myself I knew I'd surely drown

Long ago I'd trusted Jesus and I knew he loved me still  
But, I had strayed so very long and lived outside his will  
That I couldn't feel his presence, even though I knew  
That he was always by my side and desired to see me through

I pulled into the parking lot of the church where I attend  
Went inside, sat down in back, in the dark, and searched within  
I don't know how long I sat there and considered my sorry state  
But somewhere along the way, I felt myself begin to pray

I confessed that I had let him down, dishonored his special gift  
And the heavy price I was paying now, was my own fault, not his  
I began to feel his presence all around me in the room  
The love and strength he offered, that night, saved my life from doom

I said, Lord, this load I'm under seems more than I can bear  
And, even though I don't deserve it, it is my earnest prayer  
For strength, to help me bear it, as you've promised in your word  
And by your grace, to live my life, with reverence for you, Lord

Just then, my Lord took pity on this sinner, saved by grace  
I felt his glorious power begin to heal my wretched state  
I could feel the burden lifting and, while his spirit filled my soul,  
It departed from my body, left me feeling clean and whole

When I left the church that morning, I was singing in my mind  
Relieved of all my burdens, I had left their weight behind  
And I say to all who struggle with heavy burdens in their life  
You may find relief, as I did, through faith in Jesus Christ

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C R Clark

## **The Assault on the Innocents**

The "She beast" lay silent  
As the innocents drew near  
Her talons were honed  
Her heart knew no fear  
Her gigantic beak  
Was sharpened and red  
From the blood of the victims  
On which she had fed  
I'll kill these intruders  
This vile beast would say  
I'll kill them right now  
Or, I'll scare them away  
Then, she swooped from her perch  
To begin her attack  
And dove at the innocents  
As they happily passed  
She lunged at their heads  
She lunged at their backs  
Till the innocents were harried  
From her endless attacks  
Then one of the innocents  
Called for the Chief  
To come and do battle  
With this terrible beast  
The Chief came with armor  
And weapons of wood  
And battled the beast  
As only he could  
The beast, then defeated  
Returned to her lair  
To bury her head  
In shame and despair  
The "Chief" beat his chest  
As the battle was done  
The victory was his  
He, surely, had won  
The people rejoiced  
As the innocents returned  
To their own "cubby holes"  
Safe and secure

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C R Clark

## **The Campfire**

The Aura of the campfire  
Is magical indeed  
As friends encircled in the glow  
Recount their daily deeds

A day's hunt now behind us  
We gather in this place  
To extend the day's adventures  
As we rally around the flames

Laughter rings out through the night  
As stories there are told  
The magic of the campfire  
Is loved by young and old

The embers glow and warm us  
As the stories often do  
Friendships that are nurtured there  
Will last a lifetime through

This is the "stuff" of memories  
Made when friends unite  
And share these golden moments  
That are treasured throughout life

Memories shared around the fire  
Fresh life is breathed into  
As we pass them on to others  
They return to us anew

Fellowship, friends and laughter  
Are things that we all need  
Yes, the Aura of the campfire  
Is magical indeed

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C R Clark

## The Dark Horse Is Joe T

It's the first of September at the Bar of ranch, the Sun's just startin to rise  
Joe T's stirring, gotta feed the stock, be a race to be run after while

The horses are tethered down at the crick, he'll take `em some oats and hay  
Gotta keep `em happy cause, in a spell, he expects `em to win a race

By the time Joe T's got the horses fed, Miss Sondra's got vittles on  
She says "come on Joe, it's might near ready, the coffee's already done

After "grub, " he checks, on the horses shoes, makes sure they're all real tight  
Checks out the wagon and tack and stuff and visits with cowboys that happen by

Later on he gets the wagon tarp out and laces it up good and tight  
The wagon itself is John Deere green and the tarp on top is black

On the side of the tarp, in big yeller letters, the name of the team is spelled out  
With the wagon out front, it's apparent to all that this here's the "Dark Horse" camp

'Fore noon he saddles 'Old Rooster" up and rides off around the track  
Meets up and visits with more cowboys, catches up on the latest Bar of facts

When him and rooster get back to camp it's time to get the team hooked up  
There's a good deal of pain in Joe T's knees but he'll just "cowboy up"

"Frat Rat" and "Super" get all excited when they see Joe T coming in  
They know it's "might near" time for the race and they "shore nuff" like to win

A little later on, down at the track, the parade's just finishing up  
The teams are getting nervous, ready to run, the first heat's lining up

Now a chuckwagon team has three that run an outrider, driver and cook  
The cook's gotta throw the bedroll in back and then he climbs on up

He talks to the driver, as the race is run, and tells him what's going on  
Where the outrider's at, who's catching up, does he need to slow down, or go on

Now the outrider's gotta throw the "cookstove" in then he springs up on his mount  
He's gotta pass his wagon and finish first or their time aint gonna count

There's the shot; they're startin to move, the cook's up behind the seat  
Around the barrel, they've got lined out, they're startin to pick up speed

The outrider's mounted; he's closin fast, There don't seem to be any doubt  
He'll pass `em up by the second curve so, Joe T's windin `em out

Heeyaaa, heeyaaa, go "Frat, " go "Sup, " git on around this track  
The cook says " Joe, the Outlaw Gang's comin up on the right, real fast"

As they're comin up on the second curve, the wagons are two abreast  
The Dark Horse and The Outlaw Gang, what a race, what a tight contest

They disappear in a dusty fog as they're comin around the curve

Heeyaaa, heeyaaa, both drivers shout, as they head for the last big turn

After they round that final barrel, they're ready to stretch `em out  
Heeyaaa, heeyaaa, go "Frat" go "Sup, " The Dark Horse is pullin out

As they're closin in on the finish line the teams are nose and nose  
"Frat" and "Sup" give it all they've got and they win, but it's mighty close

Joe T brings the team back around, In front of the spectator stands  
It's the same thing he always does, of course, but since they won, it's a victory dance

There's a lot of shouts from the Dark Horse fans as the team heads back to camp  
Gotta feed the horses and let `em rest, It'll start all over when the sun comes up

The Dark Horse team's been around for years, but the members have sometimes  
changed  
Outriders and cooks have come and gone, but the driver's been the same

New members will always come and go, I `spect that's the way it'll be,  
But the driver will always be the same, `cause the Dark Horse is Joe T

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C R Clark

## **The Demon's Embrace**

The demon cajoles  
Sanity ends  
Its hold, abhorrent  
Wicked as sin  
Altering thoughts  
Confusing the mind  
Feeding depression  
The victim is blind  
To reason, logic,  
Clever advice  
And with sad imperceptions  
Evil imbibes  
He utters profanities  
Threatens and rails  
Promises vengeance  
On any who'd fail  
To show the respect  
He believes he is due  
Or question his motives,  
Judgment, or truth  
Then, weeping, brooding,  
Tortured, dismayed  
The demon delights  
In this wretched display  
The misery continues  
As long as his strength  
With the demon inciting,  
Prodding at length  
Till exhausted, the victim  
In stupor's release  
Unconsciousness, mercifully  
Eases the grief  
The demon retreats  
As there's no other course  
And waits, patient, until  
The next bottle's uncorked

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C R Clark

## The Dust Of Long Ago

In the land of thermal waters, many moons ago  
When streams in virgin forests, yet with crystal water flowed  
Before the Europeans came from lands so far away  
And vowed to conquer for their king, this new land they would claim

The "Redman" dwelt these mountains, the trails and piney woods  
His father and his father's father many times removed  
Had lived and raised their families here within this pristine land  
Using only that supplied by nature's bountiful hand

His life came from the mountains, the woods, and crystal streams  
He planted fields of corn and groves of fruit and nut trees  
He felt close to all God's creatures, a kinship he could see  
With the turkey, deer, and bear, and majestic wapiti

He killed only what he needed for his people to survive  
And, thus, the game was always here in plentiful supply  
He would gather with his people in the longhouse round the fire  
And sing of "age old" heroes like Aquixo and Casqua

There were many here in those days, as many as the stars  
And they lived in tune with nature so that all could well endure  
There were Tunica and Caddo, Quapaw and Osage  
There were Natchez and many others before the Europeans came

The Spaniards with DeSoto brought iron weapons, tools, and greed  
But they did not bring understanding for the native people's creed  
They seized the people's food stores and many they enslaved  
They destroyed fields and villages as they passed along their way

The people died by thousands from drought and strange disease  
That was brought by the invaders and our people had never seen  
Yes, my son, these were our people, once mighty, strong, and proud  
But now they are just a memory passed on by word of mouth

My son said "tell me father, will we be great again, at last? "  
Will we sing in the longhouses of mighty leaders of the past?  
Will we hunt the woods and mountains and fish the crystal streams  
And once more live as brothers with the bear and wapiti? "

My son these things I tell you are things I've never seen  
My father told them to me as his father told to him  
They live now in our legends that we pass on as we go  
But, my son, these things have settled with the dust of long ago

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C R Clark

## **The First Cool Breath Of Autumn**

The first cool breath of autumn  
Is a balm of sweet delight  
Refreshing all it touches  
In the day and through the night  
The air seems light and bracing  
With each slow, deliberate breath  
The first cool breath of autumn  
Brings on pangs of anxiousness  
I enjoy the greening flora  
As the stage of spring arrives  
When nature seems to waken  
From winter's tired and dreary guise  
But, I'd rather walk a winding trail  
That forest creatures tread  
And whiff the rich aromas  
In autumns brilliant shed  
Summer has many pleasures  
And at times a stifling heat  
But it's a time of preparation  
For a harvest rich and sweet  
Each season is a wonder  
A gift from God on high  
But the first cool breath of autumn  
Is a balm of sweet delight

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C R Clark

## **The House on Centerville Road**

We stopped beside the highway  
And gazed at the old house  
I told my wife, "That's where I lived"  
When I was just a little sprout  
It looked smaller than it once did  
Back so many years ago  
Even then it was old and creaky  
But, as a kid, I didn't know  
Weathered boards were loose and falling  
Saplings grew up through the porch  
The old tin roof was rusted orange  
And the yard looked like a forest  
Here dwells my oldest memories  
From so many years ago  
When our young family lived here  
In the house on Centerville road

Those walls once rang with laughter  
And the energy of two young lads  
Riding stick horses all around the place  
Trying to "herd" our collie, Pat  
But, Pat knew more than we did  
When she'd hear Mama shout  
She'd turn us back from the road  
And herd two boys toward the house  
Dad got a job and we moved to town  
Well before I started school  
So, my memories are short and sketchy  
But, I've found there are quite a few  
My wife retrieved her camera  
And as I turned the key to go  
Snapped a picture from her window  
Of the house on Centerville road

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C R Clark

## The Hunt

As I ascend the oak  
And find my place among its boughs  
This day has yet to see the sun  
And it's luminescent rays  
The dark, the solitude of night,  
The beating of my heart in  
Hope's anticipation  
Stirs a fervor in my soul  
The frosty breath of autumn air  
Enlivens me  
My spirit soars  
A coyote calls, a chase begins  
Reliving nature's way  
Then, sudden stillness tells the tale  
Of predator and prey  
At last, light pierces darkened space  
And dances on the forest floor  
To the rhythm of branches,  
Swaying in the breeze  
And, the forest comes alive  
With songbird calls  
And crows, so close, I hear  
The "whoosh" from flapping wings  
The "rustle" in fallen leaves,  
The familiar chatter of a squirrel  
And I, perched high above this scene  
Am silent, as I watch and wait  
I have been ordained  
A player, in this primal drama  
My presence here is natural  
As is, that of the puma  
As he lies in wait to seize his prey  
I am "drinking in" the nectar  
Of the bounty God supplies  
As I savor every second  
In these splendid nature halls  
And in this wondrous moment  
I am thankful for this gift,  
For my inherent right to be here  
And this great tradition claim  
So if, by chance, as at other times,  
There will be no score today  
My plate, indeed, was full  
I have feasted on the main course  
More, would surely be dessert

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C R Clark

## The Monarch

`Twas a cold November morning from my platform on a pine  
I noticed through the tangled woods a moving, horizontal line  
The line became a shadow as it moved into the light  
Then, at last, it took a form as it flicked a tail of white

`Twas a monarch of the forest out to make his duteous rounds  
To seek and offer service to any maidens that he found  
Majestic in appearance in the woods so dimly lit  
He was nothing short of awesome as he stepped out in the field

He was highly silhouetted against the latent, hoary heath  
And steam puffed from his nostrils like a locomotive's breath  
His rack was tall and handsome his neck a massive swell  
As he foraged in the frosty lea, mighty antlers touched the dell

Each step he took was measured as he read the neighborhood  
And his acumen rewarded as a form before him stood  
`Twas a maiden of the woodland with compliant attitude  
So he uttered his intentions and a rendezvous ensued

He got right down to business and in a moment it was done  
His service had been rendered the maiden had been won  
He pawed the ground and grunted as the maiden moved along  
He hooked a limb and left his scent, then cautiously moved on

As he continued on his course he was coming near my tree  
As I began to draw my bow his eyes came straight to me  
It took him just an instant to know something was amiss  
His flag went up and he was gone, my golden chance was missed

Even so, that day was special  
For nature opened up her arms  
And revealed to me, her very soul  
And embraced me in her warmth

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C R Clark

## The Old Man And The Boy

The old man and the boy  
Loved to go out to the woods  
Collect rich pine and broken limbs  
And assorted chunks of wood  
They'd pile 'em up and light a fire  
And sit on rocks or stumps  
And talk about the good old days  
And good days yet to come  
The old man had such stories  
Of back when he was young  
And hunted with his brother  
Here in these very woods  
The boy listened closely  
To all the old man said  
He loved to hear the stories  
And he'd "take in" every word  
My "bud" and me used to hunt  
All around these hills  
Rabbits, squirrels or "possums"  
Anything, just to be out here  
My grandpap always had some dogs  
They grew up chasing squirrels  
All were hounds 'cept Bullet  
And "who knows what he was"  
The hounds would trail and bellow  
Every time they caught a scent  
Old Bullet kept up with 'em  
But he wouldn't make a sound  
When Bullet barked you always knew  
He was looking at the prey  
And you'd better get a move on  
Or the squirrel would get away  
Many's the time we cut and run  
For what seemed like half a mile  
Because we'd heard Old Bullet bark  
And knew to waste no time  
By the time that we would get there  
We'd both be out of breath  
Couldn't even sight the.22  
Till we'd took a minute to rest  
One of us would skirt the tree  
While the other watched the limbs  
When the bushytail moved around the tree  
One of us would see him

I miss those days when I was young  
I could keep going all day long  
Now, my legs don't work like they used to  
I can't even see to sight my gun  
There's nothing now that I like more

Than coming out to these woods  
Telling stories 'round the campfire  
And sitting here with you  
You see, each time I tell one  
My memory takes me back  
You might see me close my eyes  
'Cause, then when things get quiet  
I swear I can hear Old Bullet  
Calling me and "bud' to come  
My memory makes it seem so real  
'Cause, one time, it really was  
I can live these hunts all over  
As I tell these tales to you  
Like when you dream it seems so real  
Well, in my memory it's real too  
Memories can be powerful things  
When you've gone "way down the road"  
They can warm your soul, or chill your blood  
Just depends on what you allow  
So, cultivate the good ones, Son  
Don't waste time with the bad  
Those I've made here, in "God's back yard"  
Are the best I've ever had

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C R Clark

## **The Other Man's Shoes**

A friend drew me aside one day  
And, in me did confide  
Of problems with a wayward Son  
Such as he could scarce abide  
I listened while he told me  
All, the things his Son would do  
And how he was getting desperate  
For he'd never worn such shoes  
In my pride, I told him flatly  
I know what I would do  
(And, I laid it out in line and verse)  
If I were in his shoes  
It seemed to me, so simple  
It was, oh so very clear  
But, alas, his Son was not my own  
Not one that I held dear  
Looking back I see the error  
In the sad advice I gave  
But, I learned a timely lesson  
About how good friends should behave  
It all seemed, somehow, different  
When the chickens came home to roost  
The proper thing was more readily seen  
While feigning to wear his shoes  
These days I simply listen  
If, in me, a friend confides  
About things I have never known  
And try to keep my thoughts inside  
One who's certain what he would do  
In someone else's shoes  
Has, likely, never worn those shoes  
And never supposes too

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C R Clark

## **The Times They're Always Changing**

I've always loved the woodlands  
Even when I was a boy  
To hunt and fish and camp out  
Would bring me endless joy

The grownups went to deer camp  
It seemed the time would never come  
When I was old enough to go  
And be trusted with a gun

But, when the time had finally come  
In an instant I was hooked  
The camping and the hunting  
I could never get enough

Then, on through my teenage years  
My fever just got worse  
From dawn till dusk out on my stand  
Or stalking through the woods

The grownups started "wimping out"  
After only a few days  
I'd tease and shame them as they left  
But, I was going to stay

It went on like that for quite a spell  
I would often hunt alone  
Our camp was big for a little while  
Then most of them went home

Then when I was in my twenties  
I met this "pretty thing"  
We were married in the autumn  
Just before deer season came

I told her how I loved to hunt  
She said that would be all right  
But when I left her at the door  
My throat felt kinda tight

That year we had a bigger camp  
Kinfolk came from near and far  
Dad had bragged about my prowess  
How I'd hunted long and hard

I sat my stand quite early  
Well before daylight  
Then suddenly it occurred to me  
"I can't stay out here tonight"

My "sweet thing's" waiting back at home  
While I'm sitting in a tree

But, what'll I tell them back at camp  
When they see I'm gonna leave

For all the past few years  
I've shamed them without mercy  
And told them "they were wimping out"  
When they left the woods too early

I tried to think up an excuse  
For going home that night  
But, the more I tried, the more I knew  
That bird weren't gonna fly

I'd just go back to camp early  
And create a little smoke  
They'd all still be out hunting  
And I'd just leave a little note

But then when I got back to camp  
Much to my surprise  
Every one of them was there  
Standing around the fire

Now what's the chance of that, I thought  
As I was walking in  
And then I noticed on every face  
A silly, smirky grin

You're early son, my dad piped up  
Didn't 'spect you in till dark  
I said well.....I....ah...I don't know  
I ain't feeling none too smart

My uncle said "I can see it, boy  
You're about to get the shakes  
You best go get that purty girl  
To put a cool rag on your face"

He said "Son, I know what's wrong with you  
You're suff'rin from withdrawal  
You best go home and get it fixed  
You can try again tomorrow"

Then laughter burst out 'round the fire  
It sounded loud as thunder  
Then I knew that I'd been had  
I'd really made a blunder

As I drove off down the road  
My windows rolled up tight  
I could hear the "heehawing" back at camp  
Till I got plumb out of sight

That day I learned a lesson  
Now, I don't do much haranguing  
'Cause, to paraphrase what Dylan said  
The times they're always changing

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C R Clark

## **There's A Land God Has Promised Those That Serve Him**

There's a land, God has promised those that serve him  
And I know, one day, that land will be my home  
I'll go there when my life on earth is finished  
Lay my sorrows down and never more will roam  
I'll be present with the Saints of all the ages  
And I'll visit with my Savior every day  
I'll be at peace with everyone in Heaven  
Oh, I'd love to be there, Lord, with you today

God has told me in his word about this Heaven  
He said the streets are paved with purest gold  
There's riches there that cannot be imagined  
And there's perfect, peaceful, joy for every soul  
It's a place where sin and greed, no more, can tempt me  
Where selfishness and lust cannot abide  
I know that I do not deserve to go there  
But, my Savior has already paid the price

I sometimes dream of following my Savior  
Through the air, headed straight for Heaven's Gate  
There are multitudes of joyous people with me  
We've just been rescued from a world that's full of hate  
We were caught up on the clouds to be with Jesus  
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye  
As we draw nearer to the land that God has promised  
My excitement's getting more than I can hide

There are angels standing round us everywhere, now  
Singing glory, glory, glory to the Lord  
All my life and all my sins are flashed before me  
They are noted and forgiven one by one  
As I'm standing in the presence of the Father  
My mind is flooded with a peace I've never known  
And suddenly I'm shouting with the angels  
Singing glory, glory, glory to the Lord

As I said this is a dream I often think of  
But, I know one day this dream will all come true  
Because one day I gave my heart to Jesus  
He forgave me and He cleansed me through and through  
It was at this time He sealed a promise to me  
He said I go now to prepare for you a place  
And I will come again and take you with me  
And you will live with me in glory for always

So my friends if you've not made your reservation  
If you've not accepted Jesus for your own  
If you don't know the joy that God can give you  
If you're wandering in your sin all alone  
Just give your heart to Christ and ask forgiveness  
For all your sin, one time, he did atone  
And He will give you life everlasting

Then you'll look forward to the day he'll take you home.

Yes, there's a land God has promised those that serve him  
And I know, one day that land will be my home  
I'll go there when my life on earth is finished  
Lay my sorrows down and never more will roam  
I'll be present with the saints of all the ages  
And I'll visit with my Savior every day  
I'll be at peace with everyone in Heaven  
Oh, I'd love to be there, Lord, with you today

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C R Clark

## **Thickets And Thorns Or Sweet, Sweet, Fruits**

Man is like a plot of land  
That basks in God's sunshine  
Saturates itself in God's rain  
And nurtures life within itself  
By means of natural laws  
Which, incidentally, God made

Land that's full of sand and rocks  
That is left alone by man  
Is never tilled and never worked  
Cannot produce a good harvest  
But only crops of tangled thickets  
And rough and prickly thorns

But, if the rocks should be removed  
And man should till the sod  
Enrich the soil and plant his crops  
God will send the sunshine and rain  
And the same land will produce  
A harvest of sweet, sweet fruits

A human life, when blessed by God  
With a knowledge of Jesus Christ  
Like a field of good seeds  
It is a crop, planted by God  
Whose harvest depends on  
How well it is worked by man

Thickets and thorns or sweet sweet fruits  
Each man, himself, must decide  
A worldly life yields a worthless crop  
While a life filled with Godly works  
Yields a wonderful harvest  
Whose lasting value cannot be measured

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C R Clark

## **Thunder Rolz (Haiku)**

Cousins sleeping sound  
In the hay in Grandpa's barn  
Snug, as thunder rolz

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C R Clark

## **Tornado**

On February 5,2008 a tornado ravaged Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Alabama, leaving 59 people dead

Like a torrent, it came crashing, smashing everything it met  
Breaking trees and moving buildings, anything 'twas in its path  
And it came so quick that many scarce had time to get away  
From the vicious, killer wind that left destruction in its wake

Those who heard it said it thundered like a freight train or a jet  
And the sound reverberated like eruptions in their head  
Giant trees were snapped and tossed, as if they only were a match  
And many buildings just exploded when engulfed within its swath

Many city blocks were leveled as it moved from state to state  
Many families were uprooted as their homes were blown away  
More than a dozen lives were taken here in Arkansas alone  
Nearly sixty by the time that its intensity was gone

Interviews with victims on the next day's news report  
Showed people who'd been spared and giving glory to the Lord  
Though their homes and all belongings were strewn all over space  
God protected the important things, all else could be replaced

For those whose lives were lost, there are many filled with grief  
And it will take some time before their families feel relief  
But, for those who knew the Lord, I know they're resting well today  
And if they had a chance to come back, they all would choose to stay

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## **Tranquility**

A gentle breeze wafts across the lake  
As I relax beside the fire  
My thoughts abate to non awareness  
And I am engulfed in tranquility

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C R Clark

## **We Valentines**

To my wife of 33 years

If you will be my valentine  
I'll do for you things "oh so fine"  
I'll take you to the woods with me  
And teach you how to "sit a tree"  
And watch for game, down on the trail  
And, with an arrow, it, impale  
Ill teach you how to "gut" your kill  
And cook it on a spit  
Then, you can help me tan the hide  
And make a blanket out of it  
I'll teach you how to make a fire  
With only sticks and grass  
And then, I'm sure that you'll agree,  
The best, I've saved for last  
When supper's through and we're rested up  
To the creek we'll go "a trippin"  
And, there, in the woods, we valentines  
Will go in "skinny dippin"

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C R Clark

## Winona

Winona is a wildlife management area in the  
Ouachita mountains of Arkansas

Winona wakes in springtime, cheerful, with a bent preen  
Her winter ravaged skin reveals new raiment, fresh and green  
She takes a grand and sober breath then readies for the task  
To be, again, the very best that anyone could ask

She was wounded in the great ice storm of many years ago  
Her scars stand as a portent, nature's healing can be slow  
But, when one is scarred by nature, then nature will restore  
And the scarred is often stronger, even better than before

She summons me each autumn with her promise of respite  
And never has she failed to elevate a wearied mind  
She's intensely empathetic with those who come her way  
She relieves the dull, prosaic grind and the stress of everyday

In the early morning darkness she has drawn me deep within  
Then held me in her bosom as a bright new day began  
I have sat with her around the fire, known her hospitality  
Then, slept in pure contentment as her warmth surrounded me

In the desert of this daily life, an oasis one may find  
She stands apart like Shangri La, a Utopia of kind  
Her call goes out each autumn, patrons come from near and far  
For renewal of their spirit to Winona of the Ouachitas

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## **Worry**

Worry is a loathsome thing  
It never pays it's due  
It bends and crumples the lonely mind  
And ends with nothing new

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C R Clark

## **You Don't Know If You'll Have Tomorrow**

This was originally written as a song

You don't know if, you'll have tomorrow  
Or even if you'll have tonight  
All you know that you have for certain  
Is right now, my friend, right now  
God is calling, Satan's tempting  
Life or death is what's at stake  
You can't ignore it, you must act on it  
This decision will be made

The preacher just stepped down from the pulpit  
The invitation has begun  
As I stand here my body is trembling  
My face is flushed, my hands are numb  
The Holy Spirit's working on my soul now  
Like he's done so many times  
My heart is beating wilder all the time now  
As the preacher's words keep running through my mind

You don't know if you'll have tomorrow  
Or even if you'll have tonight  
All you know that you have for certain  
Is right now, my friend right now  
God is calling, Satan's tempting  
Life or death is what's at stake  
You can't ignore it, you must act on it  
This decision will be made

I just asked the Lord to forgive me  
And to cleanse my heart today  
I feel a holy warmth all around me  
And the prayers of every saint in the place  
My heart is full of joy, I received him  
Tears have begun to fill my eyes  
One second I was standing here in silence  
But now, my feet are running down the aisle

You don't know if you'll have tomorrow  
Or even if you'll have tonight  
All you know that, you have for certain  
Is right now, my friend, right now  
God is calling, Satan's tempting  
Life or death is what's at stake  
You can't ignore it, you must act on it  
This decision will be made

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