

The Hystery of the Broken Fether

The Hystery of the Broken Fether

Allison Muri

The Hystery of the Broken Fether

It was 1917, 76 yrs ago now, that yr was so hot and dry
It was August I remember dry dry heat in my nostrils
so dry it hurt to breathe in the air in to my lungs. We
should of nown with them Crows flying so silent, they
wouldnt even laugh out loud like they usually do. Thats how
quiet it was. the threshers were down and the men
wouldnt even talk they didnt even laugh there was only
those cricking whirrs that the grasshoppers make they
rattled a round in the space between your ears it seemt to
me. Thats why the straw monkeys from Davey Schmitts
threshing crew could sneak off like they done, no one
took notice not even Davey and he was usually pretty sharp
with them boys.

Thats what I remember most, it was the dryness of it
all, even your eyes was all itchy with the chaff and the dust
that was all over the place when the men was taking the
crop off. That harvest I remember every one was pretty
tents, they new they had to get the crop off without no
problems because of the yr before theyd pretty much all of
them lost everything, there was rust so bad nobody had
nothing worth nothing left by the time they took the
crop off. There had been no frost in 1917 luckily, and not too
much stinking smut but still they was worried. If any thing
happent now like rain or hail theyd all go bely up. Now I
dont look at the sky so much no more except out my
window but then we watched it, it was as familr to us as
our own hands. Every one was watching for clouds to
come up sudden and black, every one was worried theyd

Allison Muri

feel those sudden puffs of hot wind from the south that ment hail was coming.

So anyhow, the reason why Im remembering this what happent so long ago, its becace of Mrs. Schwan, she used to live on this floor, she died last week. And its not that Im all shook up over it or nothing, I barely new her, but it was just that littel bit trubling because she was only 60 yrs old, she was younger then my own children. So it made me start thinking, I spose I shoud be writting down the story, some one shoud no it. But probaly not my children, not Barbara for sure, Ill be writting this story down for my grandchildren and grategrandchildrn, they might be intrested to read it, to no how it was then. So, thats what Ill put in my will, that this here story cant be opent up until all my childrens gone

So anyways,

I was in the cooking house mixing up the biskets but I sure woud have like to seen there faces then when they shucked off all there closthe ichy as they were and dove in to the damn swimming hole. Because when they cum up they near swallowd the water they were going spit, each into the others face. There was old Sam Colridge and he wasnt yelling at them from the grass to get out of the damn niether he was floating, he was belly up in that water right in between of them. his long gray hair it was floating all a round his gastly face only it looked green and a live like algee only he was a corps, he was all swolln and his arms was out stretched on the water he looked like he was going give them too boys a hug.

Well there you have it then. Seems like every story needs a body now dont it. It needs a death. a story needs a body it seems like men need to see a corps to no there

the hystery of the broken fether

a live. They can only feel a quickening for that instant, not like a real movemen not like a real life in side of there body, but may be like a fliker like a flutter of powr. Im a live and you aint I got that over you. So this here story, its like on, its like Parry Mayson, its like Peter Gunn or like Magnum or whatever, it has its death, thats what its about.

Sams death was a mistory. Which is what Im telling you. Its the mistory of Sams death and its the hystery of Sams ranch, the Broken Fether Ranch.

my kids they took hystry in scole so I tryd to lern som to. but ~~hyster~~ history its al a bout deths, really, so I didnt like it vary much, its just stories about men kilng other peple in one way or an other its like waching the news its kind of depresing. the thing a bout histry is it al hapened mostly in England iether that or only them places that England ever had some thing to do with, it seems to me. So we al have to look back to there for our cultyour. But this what Im writting its hystery to, but its not that kind that youd study a bout in scole. be cause its sort of more about a life, its probaly not so intresting as a real history tho.

O yes, Im Indigo de Plume and I was there and I saw it all. and what I didnt see I herd.

So I'm going to tel this story Ive ben thinking on it for a long time now, wondring a bout may be puting it down for peple to no. I had one page once I wrote, it had just some few words on it, it also had my name sined on the botom but it didnt seem like it told the story vary wel. So I had that in my dror of my desk under neath my speshial papers like saying who gets my bone china teacups Ive tried to match the cups with my grand children, they al have there own personalties it seems.

Allison Muri

But thn like I was saying it didnt seem write, it wasnt quite rite so when we had that speaker come in to the Home that time, this one he was talking about keeping jernals he was a real smart fellow from the Unversedy or some thing, hes a local Hysterian. anywys he had some leters with his name, and hed even writen a book so he seemt like he mite be werth lissening too.

so there wasnt any men showd up to this speker they try to bring in peple to make al our lifes richer and fuler, I alwys say, you wanta make my life rich, give me cream and eggs in stead of this here skim milk and bran. but o wel we get motorvational spekers.

The men they wasnt to intrested in keeping jornals, though there was that one time some yung blond woman with grate big gold earings in a silk blows that kept falling off of her sholder come to tak a bout geting in tuch with yr iner emoshens she wasnt waring a bra niether and the men they al evry one of them come shuffling and nugging one a nother in to the comon room. they evn weeled in old Barny who doesnt no whether hes coming or going no mor. Wel let me tel you spirits wer high when we had our cribage ternament later that evning. Jack Nelson he put on a tape it was som old fidle music and som of us danct.

Anyways, this one speker, his name it was Mr. Bloom he had long hair and a ~~bar~~ beard which he kept trimmed up real nice he was wering irened jeans with a crease and a jacket with irened on elbow paches. He had big round glases he looked like a wise old owl, he was real intresting, he sayd he was resergering the history of Saskatchewan, hed alredy rote a theseus on wheat and things like the wheat mige and how the difrent crops efected the lifes of the setlers living hre. he sayd the bufalo and the prayry wool they was a perfect sistem. but

the hystery of the broken fether

anyways he sayd when the settlers come to imprve the land they brout in wheat and that was eaten by grasshoppers and wheat midges, it got rust, it shriveled in the sun, they brout in lifestock to. he sayd it al got started it was a Polassy of Sir John. A. Mcdonald, a Nationl Palsy, to make sure Canada got the North West Terra tories. and to make somwher for the fokes out East to sel to. So thats why they bilt the railroad, then they worked at filing up the land with home steaders. It was real intresting, Ive lived hre al my life, I didnt no al this stuf. he sayd there was a gimmik to get the settlers to come out, it was Red Fife wheat! it was al talkd up as the best wheat in the world for miling flour, but it was to hard for stone mils and the flour it was acturly quite dark. but that didnt mater to the governmen of Canada nor to the, they had a porgram, it was to attract settlers, they gave awy the free seed of Red Fife and then the terning of the prayery sod progresed like a preyry fire!

hes riting a new theseus this time, its one with what he calt human intrest this time, he wants to publish it he says so hes looking for storyes if we have some thing good, we mite get in to his book. So he told us al a bout keping jernels, you had to by al this stuf like a lose leafed binder and those littel colored plastic tabs to label difrent parts. and he told us al the histry of jernal riting, its just as important as real riting, it seems, and he rote TODAY I AM FEELING . . . on his plastic white bord with a felt marker

we was spose to finish it of like a list of singal words. Dot she showd me, she wrote —

1. very frendly

Then she scribled it out. Kind a warm in here aint it, she sayd to me. she winkt at me real slow. we was gigling

Allison Muri

in the bak like we was in school or some thing. Tho he wasnt realy my type atall.

I was worried we mite have to hand our jerneln in to him to read like as if we was in school, but luckily he just had us read stuf out loud bak to him. I never even let Dot see what I was riting, I alwys kept my arm over top of my paper I think maybe she was a littel hurt I think she thot I was being secretev but of corse it wasnt that its just a mater of dignaty. Evry one alwys sayd what a grate memry I have, I can remember long lists of grosries and lots of littel things but thats just so I dont leave no notes lying around where peple mite see them.

I saved that binder tho it turnt out to be a waist of mony, Im not so good at jerneling, Im not so orgainized about my thouts and feelings and I didnt like that paper much niether. I like this here leter paper that one of my grandkids sent me, there alwys thinking thats al old ladys hav to do with thier time is rite leters, but this has a nice feel, it puls on my pen nice, not like that smooth loose leaves, you cant hardly feel like your riting on them. and I like the flowers on the botom to, re minds me of my gardin. So anyhow He sayd present hapenings shoud be in the blue secshin, past reminisinces yelow and then there was sectshins for speshil kinds of descryptions, like characatur, I forget what he calt it and then may be the looks of things like the sun in the morning. What about recipes sayd Tillie — that Tillie, shes alwys got a good idea

Mr Bloom, he sort of lookt surprized, he sayd O well, sure why not. and so we al picked pink for that, and in the free riting time Tillie she rote down her recipe for potato lefse, Dot she rote down one for pfferfernuse theyr littel pepery cookies, I rote one for real nice lite dumplings. Jane Seymor she rote one for crescent rolls

and Olga, she rote one for something calt perishkey, thats like perogys in cream. We al photo copyd our recipes after and gave thm out to one an other, I cant imagen why because they dont alow us in to the kichen here and our littel toaster ofen and cuberd in the comon room, those arnt good for nothing and besides, non of us is to much for lifting and mixing things up no more. So anyhow. Thats what we did.

Which is all to say, wel Mr Bloom he was real hapy like he was proud of either us or him self, he kept smiling, saying See, see, this is what riting is, its a sharing of exprience, its making your counter contrabution to the world, its beutiful, beutiful. I coud a swore he had watry eyes. Tillie she lookt over at me and winkt, it wasnt like we aint ben doing this for the last 70 yrs or so. But I think he was just darn releved to see a spark of intrest in what he was saying, some of us dont look to much like were intrested in any thing, thats because we move slow, som of us cant hear, he probaly thot we had no mind left at al, he kept clering his throte, hed say, Is this clere? Any questchins? But no body sayd nothing that first littel wile, no one that is exepct for Pearl she kept saying Ey? Ey? Wats he sayin?

So anywys, Mr. Bloom, he come bak sevral weeks in a row, he even talked a littel a bout litrature, I kind of warmd to him after al, he seemt so lost, por felow, he didnt seem like he new how to talk to us at al, like may be he thot wed never ben part of the same werld hes part of, so Dot and me we stayd after once so I coud ask him a bout how to rite a story, he cleard his throte, Like what kind of story? he sayd, Wel sort of lik a mistry I sayd, so he told me and I tried to remember it al and write it down as soon as I got bak to my room.

Allison Muri

and so I dont have much real lerning like in school but I do no what he sayd about how your suppose to build a Plot for a dead body, like THE MISTORY OF SAMS DEATH its got to have a structur. its got to have a 1. rising action 2. climax 3. denurment 4. closur. but I dont think I can do it like that be cause Im not a scoler and I dont understand this theery all that well niether. I gess he mite be rite, tho. I wached a few shows on TV they al had that same way, they bilt up like that and then droped of when things was tied up. I never realy notised that befor

but. It seems to me to be just that little bit indescent. The rising action well the meaning is obvious its like teasing its like a littel tikling, like nuzling or pinching, or whatever. Then theres the Climax. just like that. fast. it goes up to a point and then down. and the Denerment it seems to me thats your after denner ment its after youve had your main coarse and cake so to speak, you sit back to digrest and think on all the delights you have taken in thats when you pause and ponder and have your coffee and suck your ment. its when he lies back be for he goes to sleep or back to work or what ever it is he usully does, thats your Closir.

I thot about that afterwords, I thot realy that dont make no sense thats not the way our lifes go, I wisht I woud of sayd some thing rite then when I had it in my mind. I did say later to Mr. Bloom the next week, why is a story like that, whys it so bilt, doesnt no one want to rite a bout what its realy about? Dot, her nose was a littel bit out of joint I think she thot I was trying to hog al the atendshun for my self. But that wasnt it at al.

He just sort a relaxt then, he crost his legs, he wrapt his hands around his nee, he was sitting on a char, he sayd but thats the buty of litratyour and history to, its

placing events in a ~~context~~ con text. he sayd something like, its making things have meaning its giving our werld a structyour. But I dont no why that struckyour is like that, whys there only one peek why cant there be multipull peaks or may be not even peeks, theyr so sharp and pointy. may be insted there coud be circels widening out and out and out from the center like when you throw a stone in to a quiet pool. why is it so fast to the Closur. and why is the Closur where the ending is, what about afterwords, what about the swelling and the worry and the verycose veins, what about the puking every morning after brekfast, who's going to put a cool towel on the back of your neck? what about the Baby and the shit and spit and the love. but may be Im taking this al a bit to far, may be thats realy not what that littel pictur he drew ment at al.

I dont understand that very well be cause I only got my grade 4, Im not vary smart. Because I couldnt go to school as much as I shoud of, there was one back then but it was 20 miles away, we didnt have an extra horse and be sides my Mum, she needed the help at home with all the littel ones and I didnt do so well at riting anyhow. Arithmetic, I was vary good at that but I always failed English. A Red Indian Thot He Mite Eat Tobaco In Church, thats how I remember that speling but mostly im a poor speler, thats how I was in scool. I couldnt get those leters to act rite, it took a lot of yrs before the words stopt looking like a jumble somebody just threw up on the page, evry wich way. So my father, he just up and sayd one day, My girl youv got enough of that schooling, you can manage wel enuf, and we need you here at home. A farming woman dont need to lern that stuf anyhow. So. I stayd home, never lernt to rite beter. Thats all

Allison Muri

But anyways Im the only one now who nos this story so I guess its up to me to tell it as best I can.

But the other thing is, I dont no realy how to work them chaptiers, I dont realy think I can organ ize this vary wel. I dont no how arthors wod no when to start and when to stop so I guess Ill just keep going until I get tired and then pick up where I left off when Im all rested up again. Like now, may be Ill stop for a while.

So Im back now, its already a day sincet I started to write Yesterday it wasnt so good, I just put down my pen and went down to the lounge for my tea, I all ways meet Dot for tea at 3 oclock, shes my best frend. we was neibors for many yrs, she moved next dor to us on 31st St. when she was just a bride. Shes the same age as my boy John wod be tho, so its not like we did things together like we never had the same circels of frends, and then Mr Lessworth, he left her after they was only maried for 5 yrs. She just woke up one morning and he was gone, some fokes sayd he was living in sin with another woman, or at the least, he mused he was in love with her enuf for him to leaf Dot behind with two young ones. Anyhow, she didnt like to visit much after that she kept to her self, she managed some how to raise her kids I dont no how, he sent her som mony evry once and a wile I think. she nver borowed so much as an egg from us I kno that.

but she got beter after her children was grown a littel older, she startd comin over for tea some mornings after the kids was of to school, she sayd she felt like a new person again now she coud just up and walk out her dor and not worry about the kids. So we got prety close then over the yrs we shard some of our secrets like way bak when I found out I was expecting another one, my boys

the hystery of the broken fether

they was starting there ~~careers~~ careers and Barbara and Betty al ready married their selvs, this was long after I thot I coud be having mor children, she was the only one I told. and she was the only one I told too when the loss came, she just asorbed some of the painfulnes of it for me when I didnt even no if I was sad or releaved. She gave me some tea and she cried a litle bit with me.

But anyways, when I went down to meet her yester day, I was looking for her blue hair, it usully makes her stand out in a crowd, even a crowd of us old fokes. I dont no why she wears a wig such that she looks like she blues her hair, maybe its so she looks like shes got enough hair to do something to. but there you are, she always was the neatest littel thing, she never has a wrinkle in her dress not a hair out of its place and I gess its just a way of keeping her self up, though I cant say I woud care for it at all for my self. So anyway, I coundt see her at all. she sits so tiny and strait, she looks like a littel frale bird, her blue eyes they dart a round and if I dont see her, she spots me right away and cals me over, she still has a young voice, its only deeper than it used to be not like mine, its so scratchy like I was cawing or some thing.

But yesterdy she wasnt there, she had a stroke in the morning and I never even new, here I was in my room scribbling away about things long forgot, they wisked her a way to the hospital in a ambulance. They think shel be there for a few weaks before she comes back. I hope so, that she comes back that is. Seems you never can be to sure once your my age, your frends they just are there one day and the next thing you no your left a littel more a lone. wel that sounds like Im being sorry for my self, but Im not, I consider my self prety luky, I can stil get my self a round, I stil no who I am and what I was, Iv at least got famely, Iv got Barbara coming in to visit now and then,

Allison Muri

tho she lives down near Speedy Creek now so she cant be coming to ofen, not with Jack doing so poorly. Theres Betty and Jim, and Anna. Tho I dont see them al that much, Betty and Jim retird out in Vancouver, Annas moved to a condo in Miami, they rite me leters al the time, and then theres Cristy, she walks rite by this Home on her way bak to her apart meant after classes, she stops by for tea evry once and a wile to. So I'm not like lots here theyv got to visit with volintears from church groups and such. But stil. it takes you strange just that littl bit when some one you new be fore her hair was gray, who was livly as a robin hoping around in her kichen, and laghing most the time too, just up and vaneshes from your life, may be for ever. Be cause shes old

And shes only 74, I was all ready 19 or 20 when she was born, with my own ~~husband~~ husbound and babies. That was a big difrence then, of corse, but we been frends now for prety near 2 life times, and being that far apart in our ages dont make much difrence when your as old as we. but I cant help but think of it, shes old enough to die just because shes old, and Im nearly 20 yrs her senior.

I wil have to go visit her, Ill sit by her for a while tho they say she cant move very wel nor hardly speak, but she might here me, she might apesiante the compny, she mite be lisning for kind voices. I spect I woud be

Im bak again now, Iv had to rest up myself for a day or to. This riting, it sure gets to be hard. not only hard becaus of the way your hands ake, the pen it was falng out of my fingers, there so notted up these days, the last time I think I rote to much al at wonce, to. but its also hard becaus Im trying to do this righte, to tel this story like I was a real writer, but I never new al the rules befor

the hystery of the broken fether

Because heres another thing to think about, my grategranddotter Cristy she tol me just the other day when she stoped by. I askt her what she lernt that day in her English clase. She sayd if your writting some thing its got to have a ~~vise~~ voise thats either 1st person, 2nd person or 3rd. she showd me her notes. Now that dont make no sense to me, it seems as if theres one person writting it down, then that person is everybody, al three of those peple, so what difrence does it make? O wel, I gess Ill just say what I no and someone els can worry about the rest.

So anyhow, I gess thats got nothing much to do whith this here story that Im telling. I gess if Im going to get this here done, I better just get back to it.

Mary Plumay, she was Iph's mother, she told me the first time she saw old Sam Col ridge, he was the first man she saw when she come in to Maple Creek on the CPR train from Moose Jaw in 99. She was stil setting in the train and she saw him standing in the window like it was his own framed portret and he looked like a wild anymal, like a skinny scruffy Cyote, like the one she saw from the train on the way out, looking over his sholder with his tonge hanging out like he was laghing. Sam wasnt laghing tho he was squinting in to the sun and his face was in a snarl with his teeth showing yellow and black. and white was in the corners of his mouth like he was dry and thirsty. He was chewing snuff and he looked pardon me but this is what she said like he was spitting shit in stead of water.

Coarse Mary didnt talk like that usully she was a English lady. She came out when Saskatchewan was stil the North-West Teartories, she came out to be with Abrham. Abe, he come out be cause of the pictur which was

Allison Muri

painted on the side of the Emigration Office. Mary said he jus stood and starred evry time he went by there. It had CANADA in big red letters, and feelds, and big strong plow horses, and stooks of wheat like youv never seen. and a sine in the window said 160 acer farms in Western Canada Free. Finely he went in and talked to a sales man, that man coud talk a line, he talkd facts and figurs, he talkd of riches and welth, he sayd there was free catle too and free farm implymeants but Abe never did get those. Anyhow, Abe he was the youngest son, he didnt want to work in some bodys shop or nothing like that, he wanted that free virgin land like nothing else. Mary, she sayd it was like he was bewiched. LAST BEST WEST, they calt it, which ment that it was the best land you coud ever want and it was going fast. Sort of like a Going out for Busyness Sale. All stock must go, rock botom prices and dont miss out.

Anyhow, Mary had no intent of going along, but then she folowed him out after al, because she had a bun in the oven. Abe was a effectshunit man you see and when he decided to come to this land of golden oportunety he new he wood be lonely for her so he was overcum with love when he told her good by. and Mary she wasnt as strong as Abe was, she was a big woman but he was a bigger man and so he left her a going away present so to say. at least, she used to joke about it that way, that was when she wanted to get under Abes skin and it surely did, hed get al read in the face, he stomp al about the house and then go do chores or some thing. So anyways that was her Sacofice for her family she left her home and her mom and dad and sisters and brothers that she loved, she left her music lessons, ~~even tho she wanted to be a concert pianist~~ even tho she had grand ideas. She wanted to be sexesstful in her life, but may be she new deep down

the hystery of the broken fether

that she woudnt ever be a Mots-art nor a Beatoven nor nothing like that, and so she come out in to the wilderness so her family would have a father. Mary was a good mother to her children that way.

Wel. I gess Abe, he showed he was a good man to because he told Mary rite befor he left that hed take care of her, whatever came of that last night he was there. Exept still he was some surprised when he got the leter that she was coming and why. But by then, he couldnt do nothing about it any ways, because she was allready on the ship coming over.

So anyways,

They was maried in Maple Creek that very day that she got ther, she with wite ~~stain~~ satin gloves, and a beaiful pink lacey dress, They stood befor the alter and the Father he red to them from his missile and he gave them his spirituall massage, and that afternoon Abe he bot up his winter suplies, that was 25 lbs of navy beans, 100 lbs of flour, cured pork 5lbs of cofee 25 lbs dried fruit that was manely prunes. Then Mr and Mrs Abe Plumay they set out on Abes open wagon, they got to the home sted that very evening. because it was something like \$2 to stay in the Cypress Hotel. that was a bit steep and you didnt even get brekfast.

Wel, whats all this got to do with Sams death, I supose thats what your asking. but like I sayd, Im not much a riter, I can only do the best I can, so I got to start somewheres about 18 yrs before he got himself kild. I got to make the conections.

So anyway that wasnt too much of a hony moon, but thats the way it was bak then. My one dotter Anna she got maried in 39 — I had three girls and two boys, well now theres only the girls, but I gess of corse there not girls,

Allison Muri

there old ladys. Thats the awful thing of it when your children, thats how you think of them no matter if there 3 or 63, when your children look like your gramma you somehow cant place your self. That theres my little girl, I sayd to Tillie last time Barb come to visit. I sayd to her, see that old lady with the gray hair and foolish handbag, thats my litle Barbara. Tillie shes so nice, she sayd Oh my no, it's lovely, just a lovely bag. Dot, shes stil prety much got all her marbles not like some of those here, she just laghed.

I was just teling Dot just the other day, it was the day be for she had her stroke, I was teling her how Barbara the last time she was up she was all in a flap it was because of Bettys grandchildrn. Terry, hes been going to college in the city well hes moving in together with Cristy shes his cusin, shes in her third yr now. Barb just cant beleave Tina and James are alowing it. As if they coud say one way or a nother how there ful grown childrn shoud be. well, Cristy and Terry they alwys was good frends, I remember when they was just too littel mites, they wasnt more than 4 or 5 they was thick as theves I remember that Christmas it was the last one in our old house, it was befor Mike dyed, the last one befor I movd here to the Home. they was al over for super, al the kids and grandkids and there kids We had ham that yr it was ham with pine apple rings and a glaze and Mike he just wanted a turkey so bad, he said sixty yrs, mother, sixty yrs we been having turkey. My mouths watering for turkey. with salt. and what is this here pink thing with fruit on it. he was just joking of corse but I used up some of the nex weeks grosry money and gav him his turkey for new Years.

So anyhow Terry and Christy they playd al thru the holiday, evry one stayd in the city for three four days and

those kids they never had a fite, not one. I hardly never even saw them, they was always up in the atic, they liket playing with the old closthe and stuf that was up there some of Mike's old saddle gear they liket that a lot they pertendid to be cow boys and Indians and horses I think. Now theyr moving in to gether for school, it seems to make sents monywise but Barb, shes just got her self into a bit of a tizzy she thinks its real wrong. I said, Barbara, theyr cusins, I sayd What are you thinking? And she sayd Well that may be true enuf but still, a yung man and a yung woman, you dont want to put your self into that kind of situashin its temptashion they cant handle them sorts of things when theyr yung like that Best not to put them selves in to that sichuation in the first place. Tina and James they otta put a stop to it. Its wrong, a man and a woman living to gether like that when theyr not maried. Its rong and it looks bad to. It reflects badly on the famely. She sayd, I wonder what Betty thinks of it, she must be just mortafied.

Wel, I talked to Betty, she phoned last week, she never sayd boo about it, shes sending the 2 of them some money so they can by a new toaster oven. Barb phoned Anna tho, she tolt me that last week and Anna thinks its just not Christain. Certainly I wasnt never like that so proodish. I dont think. Tho I made sure I took them to Church evry Sundy when they was kids. When Barb got maried she started to get serius about her faith, then I remember bak in the 70s she started going to al them ~~retreads~~ retreats she got in tuch with her sprituality she sayd. Which that means she dont approve of nothing no mor. O wel. shes a good girl.

Anyways as I was saying my one dotter Anna she got maried in 39 here in Saskatoon that was bad timing tho of corse, but she wasnt to no, she got a telergram not

Allison Muri

three yrs later from Eurpe somewheres and all of the suden there she was left all alone a widow with a too yrs old boy. So of course she had to go to work, it wasnt to hard to get her self a job. but then she had to leave the baby with me, so anyways she traveld a lot and Bobby he just staid with us and then when she got maried again when he was 12, he didnt get a long with his stepdad so it was like I had a nother son. So I had kids in my house for forty yrs all together, he left home when he was 18, it was in January of 1958 just after our 40th weding anadversary.

So it was like I got three seprate lifes, three difrent storys. I was one person befor I got maried, then I lost that person al that time I had a famely. Then I was a nother one after they was gone, I was a new self, thats the one I am now. A new self with a saggy body.

You no, it seemt some times I was wæandering all the time I was a wif with children for them 40 yrs, but that was my life and I made the best of what it was. Mike he was a good man and a good father, it wasnt him it was me. I wasnt wandering in serch of some thing, it was in serch of my self. Not like it was a quest, not like that ledge end of King Aurthors ~~Kings~~ nighties, they was on a misshun to find some thing, it was a holey grill and it woud give them power if they could find it. But expt they never really did get that. Or I always wonderd how come Moses, he wanderd 40 yrs until he come to the pormissed land, why did they need all that? Wasnt they living and loving and evrything anyways? Wasnt God feeding them and waching over them. Whyd they need to take that land. And again thats like all those emigracion peple from the Canadian govermen who was calling Canada the same thing, a pormiss land, a Garden of Eden, so just like in the storys, evry body left off living their lifes to go

in serch of that virgin land that they coud turn into there own welth. It seems like its greed, just that pure and simpl. But what al them storys has to do with my life, I dont no. I think maybe nothing

But thats not what I was teling what was I teling?

Oh yes my one dotter Anna she got maried here in Saskatoon and then she went on a honey moon they went by train to Nigra Falls they saw Queen Victoria Park they even went on the boat the Made of the Mist. Barbara went on a honey moon too, though she and Jack maried when money was tight. Oh, them two was so good for each other, it done my heart real good to see them smiling at each other that day.

The first time Barbara laid eyes on Jack Quest, she turnt red as a beet. It was at the fall fair and he was looking at the brownies which she had just got 2nd prize for. The one who got the 1st, she was stuck on his arm like she mite as well of ben callt Lepage insted of Terese. She was looking up at him, whats callt stary eyed adration. Well. She lookt nothing but cross-eyed stupid to me.

But I can see why she was like that. Barbara too. He looked like a film star. Not like a actual film star, he wasnt really so hansome, he just looked like some one who could be in a film. he had the look of a proud man. I mean a man who was decent, who was proud of himself not conceted but proud of the man he was, and not ashamed of nothing.

So Terese says, Jackie lets go look at the cute little baby ponies again. Again. like they mite of mised some thing the first time. Anyway, Thats what she sayd. He just looks across the table at Barbara, who was trying not to look like she was staring or nothing, and he winks. I new rite then that was the end of Therese on his arm.

Allison Muri

Then at Barbaras weding, Mike it was like he was leting out a big puf of air that hed ben holding in for a long long time. He was so hapy for them. It wasnt a big weding, just smal, and we invited evry one to the house after, Mike hed put up a kind of a tent in the back yard, we had frends who playd the banjo and fidle, someone had a harmoncia, and the men they even halled a piano over into our yard. there was candls al ofer, it was a beutiful night. Mike He turned to me and he sayd My god Indigo, your stil the lofeliest woman here and we danct a jig then. O Mike was a good dantcer, I could hardly keep up, but o it was fun trying.

So anyhow, like I was saying lots of peple went on hony moons then. But I was like Mary, I never went on one niether, I went strait from my dads house to my housbands up here. My grate grandotters one went to Hawai another went to Disnyland, can you imagin. Altho there both divorced now. Next Christmass one of my grandsons, his family there all flying to Lost Vagus, his dotter Michelle thats my grate grandotter shes flew all over the werld shes a suxesful busyness person, so now shes geting maried there. She wrote me a leter she said there going to tape it, theyl send me a vidyo. I dont have a machine altho I could watch it in the lounge I suppose. I suppose I shoud.

Well anyways thats nither here nor there, what was I conecting that to? o yes, Mary, shed just got maried her self, we're back in 1899 now.

Mary said later that she sort of new it woud be a hard life out here in the homesteding days but if she could of turnt a round and drug her piano back to England with her when she first saw Abes sod house, thats just what she woud of don. It was just geting to be evening then, when

the hystery of the broken fether

they come in to the yard, the sun was just starting to set she told me but she sayd she never even noticed the colors. altho it must of bin the usual ornge and red with mauv on the eges and with pink and gold on the under sides of the clouds. On the way over on the boat she was imagining this momen and she thot theyd be looking at the prayry sunset and holding hands together but in stead she was looking at the shak and Abe he had both his hands on the reigns.

Abes house it was bilt out of sod she new that from the one leter hed sent but only now she relized it was just plain lumps of dirt with strawy gras hanging out the edges, the roof it was straw too. and not only that, it was smal, it was may be the size of her mom and dads parler at home, it was 10 by 12 foot, and it didnt have no windows yet just a dor. Where am I gona put my piano she sayd. Abe he sayd wel itl have to go in to Olie Knuts barn loft I imagen, we wil begin struckshin on a woden house next sumer. Which they did, only not actualy the next summer, it was a couple of yrs, they just kep ading rooms on to the sides of the shak in the mean time. it was a fine house tho when it got bilt, it put Abe into det prety bad it was all woden, it had three bedrooms upstairs, it had a grate big kichen and a front room with two straw stufed chares and a wode stove and Marys piano, and her Singer tredle sewing machine. it had a littl porch to, that was where Abe threw off his dirty closthe when he come in from the barn. It was the most splended house for many miles all around.

but before that, that litel mud house was her first home and she lived there threw the nixd yrs. that first winter, there was a blizard where the snow blew right over the top of the house. It was just a big snowbank, al you could see was the blue smoke coming out the little

Allison Muri

chimney sticking up out the top. The door, it opened out so Mary and Abe, they was stuck inside for two days until there naybour boys saw there shack wasnt there no more and come over to investagate. That nexd spring Abe hung the door the other way round, so it opent in. Anyhow thats where they lived, with the bugs that creept in threw the craks and Mary spected may be a mouses famely for quite a wile to

Tho she didnt mind so much in retrespect, there was a famely lived a bout twenty miles Southeast, they spent the wole first winter living in their overturnt wagon, mother father and two near grown sons, how they did it i dont no. they didnt no nothing about our winters out here when they come I guess. Those early yrs was real hard on peple moving in from other places, and coming in with only the barest of nesessites. Everyones werst fear was to get caut in a blizerd and Parish

Thats the way it was Mary sayd, she soon lernt al there was to living here, the blizerds the chinooks, the long trips with a team hauling wheat or coal, whch usualy that was a 4 hours exposer to the cold, then there was the sumer with its moskitos, flies, hail, drowt, there was those insect invasions evry spring and sumer. there wasnt no part of the wheat plant that was safe, the grasshoppers, they ate evrything above ground, so did the redback cutworms, the army cutworms, there was wire worms that ate the seeds and the seedlings to. there was the wheat stem sawfly that ate up the inside of the stem and there was afids that ate the leafs and the wheat heads

But the home steads come anyhow, they defide the forces, the forces of nature and conkered the West. They al come for a beter life, the land of opportunity, it was in deed a grate new cuntry even with its cold winters

the hystery of the broken fether

blizerds hail stroms wiping out the entire yrs ernings, drowt, grasshoper invasions and al those many other hard ships. but thats the way it was back then. peple didnt have much of nothing, it was mostly nothing but hard work and lots of times sufring

Its funy how that hapens, like now that I got al this freed time on my hands, my hands they can hardly do nothing, its al I can do to hold this here pen and rite, which you no when I was yung and imagening a life of ees I didnt never imagen it like this. So thats how it is with me now, theres not much I need these days exopt of corse may be a new skin to fit over my old bones. I use to be plump but these last few yrs I been losing wait but my skin its just staying the same and I cant see my self no more in the mirer just my eyes waterd down and the folds of skin hanging down from my cheek bones, and my ears even hanging down, and the skin on my upper arm from where there use to be flesh and musle. My neck it looks like it been finely pleated, it just needs a bit of ironing

Anyways

Mary told me that when she was a young bride she was a cultivated lady and she prided her self on her classicle bent so al that winter while she was carying her first child she sugested to Abe names of nymfs and heros and greek gods. but Abe hadnt much schooling his family was a large one and poor and he had to work in sted, and so he didnt put much stock in names they was just some thing to tell people apart, one from the other when you was talking about them. He always sayd the best name was some thing from the scriptyours to remind the children of there duty to God. he was still a young man tho and when Mary started screeming in the night he was some what disterbed and then after 25 grueling hours currying

his team in his littel sod barn in case they might be needed to run for the doctor, he was rite wound up. So when the naybors wife come out to tell him he just lept up and ran in to the house and to the foot of his bed where Mary lay wiping off her moist and cold brow and he busted into tears and he said,

Of course she will be Iphiginea. Well, exepth he didnt say, Iphiginea, he said Fijinee, thats why she was called just Iph all her life on the farm, because no body new how to say Iphiginea.

Mary actualy liked Arora better, but she agreed because she was scarred Abe would change his mind and there child woud be fated to be like evry other child on the face of this earth with the same old name. she said thats how she use to think befor she had seven children and a house and garden and chikens to whory about.

And this is true, true as Im sitting here writting this down, she said,

And the second name shall be Moses, after Antie Elizabeth and Uncle Moses in the Old Cuntry, she said. because she was still a little bit tired and woozy from her labering. she was meaning of corse to say Elizabeth she told me later but she was starting to drift of to sleep and the rong darn thing come out of her mouth. And Abraham, he was so worked up and Mary thot in retrespect he was more than a little soused, but also because he respectit motherhood above every thing else but God, he said firm,

Fijinee Moses.

The naybors wife Mrs Olie Knut said afterwords to Mary and Iph how shockd she was, she said You couda nocked me over with a chicken fether, never in all my born days did I hear of any thing like it, but then when she turned to look at Mary, and more than that, quite

the hystery of the broken fether

ritely to give her an earful, Mary had drifted blistfully off to sleep. at least she looked blisful to Abraham, he said she must be dreaming of angel babies and he shoed old Mrs Knut rite out of the room. But really Mary was just plain exassted, she was a weary woman and scarce alive, and more than a littel sore and too hunderd of Sam Colridge's herfords could have stampeded rite threw there house hold without waking her.

And so it was that Iphiginea Moses Plumay came in to the whirld, because Abe was a man of his word and besides it woud never do to admit he was over cum by alcahol or his emoshun. He said he new exacly what he was doing when he said Moses, it was a Holey name. But he didnt no iether

So anyways, this was 17 yrs later when this story that I was telling you about got started. Well actualy it didnt get started just rite when Sam got kilt, like I sayd, I dont no how you decide where a story has its begining. Seems like you cant never just start at the one spot, you have to go back, way way back, to tel when it realy started but then even that aint the begining. Sort of like how after you peel the parchedment off a onion so you can slice it up to make rings, you no if you look at that one slice before you break the rings a part, you can see all the times of that onion in that one slice, like as if it was a page that you was reading, like each ring was a difrent story of that same onion and you was seeing a littel bit of each story on that one page. But if you try to find the begining, the rings just keep on getting smaler and smaler. and some times theres a new shoot coming off from the center so the rings look like there going on forever. You wont never find the begining youll just see all those parts of stories. And a nother thing about that onion slice is, its

sliced thin, you hold it up to the light and you can see rite threw it, its got stories that go in those two other directshuns, backwords and forwords from each ring which is a story on that one page. Well

That surely gets to be confusing, I dont no how al those Arthors tel a story from start to finish, just like that. I just dont no. Probaly its just me, I dont understand the complex naycheer of the ritened word. I gess maybe being just a mother and a house wife for al those many yrs makes it so you cant think in a strait line, you no how you have to stop rite in the middel of darning the socks at the table to stop the potatos from boiling over and then go back to get the baby whos woke up again for the third time and put it back to sleep, then anser the dor and say no thanks, not intersted, and go back to put the peas on and al the wile the kids there after you, and then sit down to your darning spred out al over the place to pick up where you left off, hopefly to finish that before you got to set the kichen tabule. Oh yes that reminds me, Ive gone off my course again. Speaking of which,

When Iph saw Sam laid on his own kichen tabule she figgured he didnt look much worse now he was dead than he did when he was alive, he smelt a bit worse tho. She was helping her mother prepare his body for the funreal because there wasnt no one els to do it Sams wife was long dead, she just gave up the gost and who woudnt, Mary sayd, married to a man like Samule. He was a rancher he was a hard man and he didnt beleve in coddling his cows nor his wife, which is why he lost haf his herd in the winter of 1907 from the Hollow gut. Mary said thats what he calt it but it was Winterkill they just didnt have enouf food. He said that fall befor the winter that he wasnt running no cow hospital and he wasnt cutting no hay for the goldarn critters, most ranchers

thot like that. they, the cattle I mean was sposeto eat the grass off the range but the snow was to deep and they just drifted over the hills and died where they stood in the snow with there heads hanging down looking for grass. and then that next March it was the first Big Stink, evry rancher members that stench, the thousands and thousands of rotting corpses kind of sweet but not a suger sweet more like it was sickley sweet at first, then it was heavy it was corrupt and you woud find your self breathing in wee tiny little gasps so the stinked up air couldnt go no ferther then it had to. Well of corse I was never there, this is what I heerd.

The cows that died in the coolees staid caut up in the branches of the trees when the snow melted away in the sun and they bloated up like balls, some times they popped, then there was that russling sound like a gentle rain it was the maggits falling down in to the papery yellow leafs, and then later the grey and white bones would let go of the other ones and fall down dry into the dry papery leafs be low.

The Cyotes tho they did pretty good that spring. Cyotes there scavingers, they dont care about rotten or smell or if its there own kill they just see some thing to take and they take it. Thats may be why there the Trick stirs be cause they stir up a fear they stir up a disgussed and some times they trick you. some times its for the bad some times for the good.

But any how

Sams long gray hair had dead brown leafs and grass matted into it, it was spred out on his tabule it was looking prety ratty, after drifting a round in the damn water for so long. Mary took a comb and she combed some of the snarls from Sams hair and she ranged it back

Allison Muri

a way from his face then she had to take off his wet and dirty old work clothe from his body which was hard to manover, his arms she had truble bending them out of the sleeves, so she finely had to cut them off the clothe not his arms. She left on his longjons tho because he only had the one pair he left them on summer and winter he was modest that way. She left him by the stove to dry. and it was all ready hot in that kichen and the smell was getting pretty high. Iph told Mary she shoud just stick him out in the sun may be lean him up against the clostheline or stick him in the garden like a scarred crow. but Mary she didnt lagh much any more by then and she told Iph to hush up and do her Christain duty which was to sweep Sams kichen flor and try to shoo the flies off from his body. Then Mary found the box on the shelf, and unrapt Sams good suit from the tissue to put it on him but it wouldnt go on he hadnt wore it for yrs she figgered and besides he was somewhat swollen. and so once he dried out a bit Sams forman helped Mary to put him in to his coffin in his under ware, he hadnt left no cash behind and no one much cared to spend all that mony to buy him a new suit. and so the coffin was shut at his funreal it woud of been crool to make him a object of fun and show him being sent off to Our Lord in Heaven in his under ware.

Not that there was many to morn the trajesty of his passing. Sam had a Cree woman living with him in his house after his wife died she was his house keeper but some people said she was More than that. but no body met her she didnt go out of the house much and certainly no body went over to visit. well exsept may be for the other ranchers and for men some times to talk busyness with Sam, but none of there wives for sure. Well she took off after a bout for yrs no body new why but some said

the hystery of the broken fether

they seen her with her black eyes and ~~swel~~ swollen lips and her nose got broke some time just be for she left.

Sams wife when she was a live she wanted a garden but he woudnt let her he didnt want the god dammed sodbusters coming in thinking you coud grow something here. Maybe that was one thing he was rite about, there stil sweting and worying and al that, stil trying to pay things off, them farmers, seems like they never did get ahead, never tamed the land like they wanted to tho they did tame it some what, there still fiting to make it grow there grain

It wasnt until Sam was in his box that the Mountie rode up he had to varify the Death. Iph she coud here him singing, he had a fine ~~vice~~ voice, as he dysmounted his horse and walked up to the house.

*Oh beat the drum slowly
and play the fife lowly
and play the ded march as
you cary me on.*

*Take me to the prayry
and throw the sod or me
for Im a por cowboy
and I no I done rong.*

He finisht his song just as he arived at the front porch door and he gave to loud and authoritative nocks on the frame of it. Iph she ran to open it her hart it was beeting in her chest she thot she mite pass out when she opent it up and there he stood.

Well, seems like storyes thay need a herow, hes some one who is the mane characatur, hes strong and

Allison Muri

handsome. but thats not al. heres the thing. he iether has to die and put evry thing to rite, like in grate litteratyour, this is like Shakespere I saw Mcbeth on that special that one time. or he has to be the one who finds out who made some one els die, he seeks for piece and justass and puts evry thing to rite, thats like on TV or he has to kil evry body and put evry thing to rite, thats like in Westerns. or theres an other kind of story, the Romance kind for women, the hero he puts evry thing to rite by Marying the beatiful women. so there not realy vary diferent, these diferent kind of herows.

So this Lootennant Arthor Conan Hitchdcock he was a hand some man he surly was like the herow of a book, you coud just imagen him going a bout and doing heroic deads and such, like reskewring young maidens from villeins. To Iph, on that day so long ago, he lookt like he coud of been knobility, he was honerrable and a stalewart prints of a man. he had blond hair and a darker blond handlbar mustash he had brod shoulders and long legs and he was six feet 3 and one quarter in. tall. he had a deep voice and wite even teeth they showed between his narrow lips when he smiled his masterfooll ~~fiendly~~ friendly smile, which he didnt do much of, smile. He was a littel bit intimitdating that way.

How de do mam, he sayd to Mary and she sayd,

Good afternoon Lootennant Hitchdcock.

Just cal me Conan Mary, he sayd. He was civil that way.

And he walked over to the corps and he sayd, Yup, hes dead rite enuff. then he ~~posed~~ paused for a moment or to. he lookd like he had a thot, like he was about to say some thing. but no, he was just looking sturn be cause he was hiding a belch and blowing it out threw his nose. Iph she coud tel because she was standing rite there, she was waching evry move he made, and she coud smel the sour

eggs and onyens even over top of Sams quite strong buqet. But then he did have a thot after al, because he sayd all the suden,

But how wood old Sam die from drownding he new well enuff he couldnt swim he wouldnt let his self get in to water any way he never even took a bath, long as I new him. it surely is a puzle.

and so he and Sams forman lifted Sams body out from the coffin again just so he could examin the corps. It was surely a plesure to watch those brod sholders in there scarlett jacket as he grabed onto Sams blue-white feet and hoisted, just like it was nothing, may be a old kichen chairs legs, and not a big hevly and somewhat sodden body like Sam was. He was a manly man, his fingers long and brown and strong but clean and the nails trimmed neat not like Sams, when he grasped on a round the white harry ankle you could see the difrence. Sams toe nails were thick and yellow and evil looking they curved over his toes almost like he was a big old hawk with its sharp talends, but he wasnt never that elegant. Anyways

Sure enuff the Lootennant found it a grate big dent on the side of Sams head rite abov the templ. Mary she sure was sirprized, she hadnt even noticed but then she hadnt gotten round to coming all of his hair yet. There wasnt no blood it had been washed away but you could see the cut and the brews rite throu his hair if you looked close enuff. Sams hair wasnt vary thick you mite say, though it hung down to his shoulders, and on the top he ws pretty much balled.

Well I aint no expert the Mouny Arthor Hitchdcock said, but this here seems to me like theres been a crime cumitted theres been murder. Looks like some one bashed him over the head looks like some one deliberaly

Allison Muri

done him in and threw him in to the damn to make it look like it was a axdent.

Well. that created some exitement in the sirrounding community. Evryone new that the Mounties alwys get there man, they was quite releaved because they new if anyone coud rectalfy the problem, it woud be the lootennant. But stil, every body seemed like they was happy to have some thing to gosip about and soon it cum obvius to all who the murder was. It was that Injan woman she cum back and she wacked him over the head with her tomhawk. Of course that was just plain ridiculus why woud she have one of those and besides if she wanted to do that she woud of done it long ago she woudnt of wated all those yrs and then snuk back to do him in it just didnt make sense. Besides Mary figgered she was most likely smartern that but thats the way some people wer, they was stil jumpy tho the rebellion was way bak 30 yrs befor, those kinds of things they hav a way of staying around and geting in the ways of peples lifes for a long long time it seems. not like a movie its over when its over. But anyhow the Mounties they coundt think of no better anser niether so they put out a Warant for her Rest. Luckily they never found her tho. No body even new who she was when she was living there and if they did they wernt saying now. So like I said befor. Sams death was a mistory, those men never did salve it.

Wel like Ive sayd this ~~miser~~ mistery its not like its a real book or nothing. there aint no neat littel endings its not like youd take it in scole. Mr Bloom, Harry thats his name, he sayd that evrything shoud tie al together at the end, there has to be a closur but I think may be the only closur wil be for me its a closur on the life Iv lived al these

yrs, it was a good life, there wasnt much mor to it then that.

My kids and grandkids, when they took in English in school they studyd some thing, Cristy says its calld the littery cannon. I dont no what that is exaclly but al it means is they studyd grate riters like first Shakedspeare and Milting. then they also studyd what was Geek clasics, which al that means is its old, thats why when some one says thats a clasic, all it means is Iv herd that one befor. so anyhow they took something calt the Illyod and the OddC. And of corse they lernt the Old Testesment.

These is al conected some how, I think its be cause these storyes is al a bout wars and kiling, as if to read it and here it over and over again woud make you beter some how, like it coud make you a reel man it coud make you noball to no that peple kil each other over and over a gain. theres that Mack Beth, he dies, theres the deth of that King Aurthor. and then al that other greek Clasic is, its realy teling about a war, its a bout peple fiting and wanting to kil One and Other.

Wel I realy cant master this at al. I asked Mr Bloom about al this stuff, hes real smart, he is that, he sayd that these types of storys is sposed to be ~~kathetic~~ kathartic, and he sayd a wole bunch of stuf I cant re member what it was, but he rote that word down on a pis of paper so I coud look it up some time. Wel. I cant find that paper no mor but I re member what it sayd in the dickshinery, it sayd that it ment some thing the same as a laxativ which I no what that is its some thing I take ofen enouf these days. but whats it got to do with these storys I dont no. What has men going about kiling each other got to do with being constirpated and then you no how it works. I dont no. I just dont no. oh wel never mind.

Allison Muri

But you no what els, even Moses, he conkered the Promissed Land, it wasnt just there waiting for him, he took it. That sirprized me when some one told me that, I all ways just thoght that God had this emty land of milk and hony wating there for him for all those yrs, gess I didnt lisen well enough when my dad he was reading out of the Bibel to us. Turns out God told them to slatter every one who was living there first, and then just steal all there land. well. I dont no why Moses, he didnt just say, well Old Man, may be Im the herow of the story just like lots of other ones but that dont mean I have to folow rite threw to the end and kil evry one off like other herows done. Why didnt he just say, thanks very much, Ill make my own story from here. ~~He probably just didnt have the balls.~~

I dont no. I gess I never wil master al of this.

you no Dot, she woud have laughed if Id said that to her. Course I never woud of come out and said it like that in so many words, she woud of knoun what it was I was hinting at. Just be cause wed never say nothing like that at a tea party, that doesnt mean we woudnt lagh about it private, amongst our selves. theres no one els alive no more that I woud lagh like that with.

Anyhow

Sams ranch it wasnt to far from Abes farm and usully the farmers and the ranchers didnt have much to do with one and other but some times there was ocasions when they got together. like this was one, when there was some thing needed to be done, some one had to help with the body and those ranch hands, they mostly al high taled out of there and went in to town to get drunk, they wernt much fond of Sam when he was live, and now he was dead they wasnt going to have nothing more to do with

the hystery of the broken fether

him. Specialy sinse they hadnt got payd yet, Sams detes wer prety high, hed borowd a lot of mony to invest in his herd and his horses, hed suferd some losses over the winter too, and evry one was just hovring around waiting to see what the cattle solt for, there was some sore feelings about that pay too, let me tell you. but anyhow, like I was saying, mostly the farmers and ranchers they wasnt to frendly.

Thats becaus Sam, he and the other ranchers was there first befor the farmers, they had land leased out from the governmen and they had there herds ranging all over the land. well actualy of corse there was other people there first but then the fur traders and the settlers they kilt off the bufalos. so any way the Indian people they had to go some wheres els be cause they hadnt no food but maybe saskatoon berrys or chokecheeries or rabbits which is hard to feed a family on. Mike used to tel the kids how some times they woud hall the bufalo bones to sell at the store they had huge wooden carts they would stack high with the white bones they colected from off the ground then they coud sell them for manufac-turing, like sugar refining in the States. Or some times the bones was polished up for handels for knives and such, I used to have a set at home, I kind of miss those when I go to cut something here, I can feel the fork bend in my hand. Or may be the bones was used for fertlizer for the cultivated lands ~~in stead of cow shit. Isnt that funy how evry things made from some thing elses bones or shit~~

anyhow Abe sayd thats how Pile o Bones, thats now Regina thats our catpidal, cum to be calt that, it was a pile of bufalo bones wating to be put on the CPR train. it was a major indusy thats what the Europenas done for the West.

Allison Muri

so then anyways when the ranchers come in with there herds of cattle they were going make lots of money they brought thousands and thousands of head. I remember my dad talking about the numbers, he said it was almost like when the buffalo herds was here there was that many cattle brought up here all at once, both herded by cowboys on horses and shipped up on trains. He said it with a kind of a marvel in his voice, he hadn't seen it here but he'd heard about it, and being a farmer, he just marvelled at the sheer size of that kind of enterprise, at the numbers and the size of it, at what was being gambled, it was investments. But then some times I myself did marvel at what people like Abe and Mary was doing, the people who sweated so hard to kill what was already growing, just to make some thing new grow. The rocks they moved, tons and tons of rocks, the tree stumps they pulled out, I remember seeing a grate big rock that was the size of a house it was in a farmers field, they blew it up with dynamite. I heard about some farmers, they had to hitch their wives on to the plows, they didn't even have oxen, so the wives pulled the plows to break the soil that first year. So no wonder the farmers and the ranchers they didn't quite see eye to eye, it was because they each thought the other was fools for what they was gambling that's what I think. And they was just fighting over the land, that's all.

The ranches I remember was the Turkey Track, the 76, the Matador and the Hitchcock Ranch they was the big ones, and Sams Broken Feather Ranch was one. I remember going to some thing like a rodeo once, there was men racing and roping and such I remember my dad marveling at the way those men could ride. Sam though he wasn't a cowboy rancher he was a gentleman rancher, he didn't come up from the States like a lot of them done, who was getting pushed out of business by homesteaders

the hystery of the broken fether

they thought they would be safe from that up in Canada. Sam cum strait from Britain, he had family mony he was going invest his catpidal in to stock, thats a catle company, and make his self a forechin. but he had lots of set backs he lost some stock he lost some mony, luckily for him he had some horses to, he sold those to the Mounties regilairly. But then when the sodbusters started coming up from North Dickota and they settled on good ranching land, some times land that only should of been for pascher and they clamed it they fentsed it off and broke it up and be for long the ranchers almost didnt have nowhere to run there catle and more impotant than that they was running out of places to water there catle, the fentses was all in the way. there was a storm brewing there thats for sure. some ranchers just up and quit they sold out there holdings. some stuck it out and tried to get the gowernen to make laws. then there was Sam he was just ornry and he wasnt going let no one push him a bout. Thats why som fokes they thoght maybe Sam got into an argement with some farmer over land that just went to far

it seemed by 1917 tho that the farms they was all over. Iph, she could stand up top on one of the hills and she could see the land streching out befor her it looked like a green and brown checkerd patch work quilt that was al rumpld on a bed. it was realy like that the land all made into squares it was like you werent looking at the earth at all it was like some thing made by humans hands.

so anyway to get back to the mystory. Iphs best frend in the hole world was one of the ranch hands from Sams ranch, she saw him lots before but they didnt come frends until when she was fourteen and at a shataqua they danced together. A shataqua, that was when evry body

Allison Muri

for miles a round gathered together Ther was tents and colord flags and plays put on by actors al after noon, and ther was music too. So anywys, Iph and Michel, they danct togethr. O he was a good dancer, he tryd to teach her a jig but his feet was to fast for her to keep up. After which Abe he told Iph she wasnt to dance with nobody unless if they asked him first. But anyways, they got to be frendly because there wasnt many other young girls around at that time and Iph she didnt have a close frend to share her secrits with and her brothers that was close to her in age, they didnt have much to say to a girl. So she started to share them, her secrits, with him hed take time to meet her in the hills and she woud sneak off from the farm with some bread and jam hid in her skirt pokets. Michel he was a good frend he was very very kind he had his own secrets to share to.

Michel he had dark skin and black hair he wore a wite shirt emboydried with red and black and orange. and he liket to eat garlic he even made it in to tea to keep his self strong. So every one on Sams ranch when he first come to work there they thot he was Bohunk. Sams men they realy wasnt to smart. There wasnt many of them in the vincy or youd think Sams men woud of nown he wasnt, probaly, but anyway thats what they thought and so they called him names and told jokes on him. Michel he didnt say nothing to nobody so it was a day or to before they caught on that he was a Metis. and that made some of the men mad it was like they lost face for calling him the wrong names or like they created the wrong idea of him in there minds and they couldnt be told they was wrong. any way Michel he was a good rider and a good worker. so anyways they prety much let him be. but he was young still and they mostly didnt pay him much atention. so he

the hystery of the broken fether

and Iph was both alone they both apresiated the company of the other one.

You no, that makes me think about how me and my housband, he and me both apresiated each others company too when we was first Married. we was stil sort of alone in each of our worlds, but sometimes we each was listning to and understanding the other one. And that was luky, because thats the only thing realy that seems to make a marige work it seems to me. Like when I was in one of those moods, it was like evrything was gray in my head, gray and blak and I ws looking for some thing to get mad or even fite about, and hed just say nothing, then hed say, Listen, my granma tolt me this story, hed tel it and it didnt have nothing to do with nothing, at least thats how it woud seem at the time, but then the more I thot about it, the beter it made me feel. and he woudnt turn a way from me niether hed rub my bak hed bring me som tea. I apresiated his compny a lot since he got to go to his busyness evry day, he made saddles and such, so he saw lots of peple but for many yrs I mostly staid at home with the kids since our winters here are so cold I just abslutely got tired out to dress all of them up in there under wear and sweters and boots and overpants and jackets and tooks and scarfs and mittens, it just wasnt worth it and besides I had laundry and baking to do plus mending dusting waxing the flors folding up the dipers. and usually I was tired not tired like I was sleepy, but tired like I didnt want ever to go nowhere but just to sit in a chair and stare at the walls. like if one of the kids wanted some thing I coud barely get my self up to get it. anyways, we always had seprate lifes like that but some how we made good company one for the other in the evnings after the dishes was done.

Allison Muri

we made it threw a lot of missedfortunes, Mike and me, we managed to stay together threw it all our mirage was probaly better than most. Which is not to say Id do it all over again sometimes well usually I say of corse I woud, no question, but some times I think I should have becom a nun, exopt then of corse I woudnt of had my dotters. and of coarse my too boys, but there long gone now.

I woud of liked to become a nurse when I was young but of course we never had the mony to send me to school. I never new I'd be one when I was 85, be cause Mike he wasnt doing to well then he lost his membery and evrything. well he only lost what hapent five minutes before, but he sure rememberd evry little thing from 80 yrs ago. Some times hed think I was one of the girls, hed say You mind your maners yung lady, and hed wipe at my lips with a kleenex, hed say Barbara your not going nowhere with your lips al ruged. Dont you no what that looks like.

Corse, he loved her as much as the others but she was the oldest, she had to work out that relasion of father and dotter for the others. And he was alwys just that litle bit over-protectif of her, he like thot her wite skin and blond hair woud make her like glas. But they was alwys like that, he loving her almost to fierce, and she loving him back but spitting evry step of the way.

So anyways in the latter yrs I had to help him out of bed in mornings while he told me a bout peeing in the closet so his mom woudnt find him, and help him in to his closthe wile he told a bout what his littel brother who died in 1915 sayd to him yesterday, and such just like a nurse woud I gess. Exopt I realy wasnt intrested in being one by then. funy how that works.

But anyways as I was saying

one day Iph met Michel out in the pascher by the damn and they sat down in the grass by some wild rose bushes they were all in bloom with there dainty and delcat pink flowrs all over the place. but they didnt pick them for the thorns that was under neath on the branches. Iph had a thought then a bout the way the preest talked the other day a bout the delicut sex and she woud of menshunned it but she didnt really no how to say the relievants of it.

Iph she told Michel evrything she had thought about and just kept in side for yrs. or just funny things they coud laugh about, she liked to laugh and no body did at home vary much they were God fearing folkes and you no in the Bibble Christ never laght. like she told him how when she was a litle girl she was scarred of the big old turkey gobbler that ran all over there farm yard, he coudnt fly, he just ran. and hed wonder about the yard looking like he was busy and going bibble babble gobble gobble, that sound could always strike tearor in to her ~~her~~ heart even now. She was as tall as he was but as soon as he saw her hed cum running over and chase her all ofer, his red sacs woud be hanging over his nose and wobling back and forth and hed run her all over the yard like he was a cyote hunting a rabbit. one day tho she cum out of the house she had her moms silver hair brush and when that old bird cum at her she just stood rite there and when he cum up to her she wacked him rite over the head. Well he fell down on to his chest his littl wings they was spread-eagled out on the ground and she thot she kilt him so she hid behind the shed all morning for fear of what her daddy might do. But when she cum in to the house for lunch she saw that turkey in front of the barn he was scraching in the dirt and his little red head it was

Allison Muri

swolln up the size of a hard ball. He didnt chase her no mor niether and that next Thanks Giving she ate a whole drumstick by her self.

and she said, Michel, if I could be any bird Id be a crow there so glinty. there like a blackness in the sky as if they took out all the light from the blue but then when you see them jaunty in the gras, theres all that blue glinting and shining out from beneth those black fethers. But its deeper than the sky and more blue than lakes or rivers its like that birds wings sucked blue out of every where it flew, from every thing it saw and so theres water and sky and rock and bluebels, blue berries, saskatoons, blue jays and flax flows and newborn babys eyes, all shining out from beneth the black. thats why the crow, she dont care about singing pretty songs like the brown medowlark beside her nest, shes seen life and shes sucked up the blue brimful, the beautiful beautiful blue.

Michel he said then Maybe thats your spirit animal then, you have to listen to it you have to let it guide you.

Well turns out he was sort of rite. Iph, she thought at first that meant she should fly like the crow straight a way from some thing and not come back. She never knew that you cant ever leave a place like that where you was born and grew up in to your self, youd carry it with you on your back even if you went a round the world. As the crow flies that means covering a territory, it means looking at the same place over and over from different angles, altho most people mean when they say that, going a way in a straight line. Me, I never ended up going very far at all, I never seen nothing much, I just come to Saskatoon from down there in the south. But you no I think I saw all of life that I should of seen.

the hystery of the broken fether

I wasnt never at no other place. not like my friend Dot or even my dotters they al been traveling after they got re tired. Dot she went to Europe to see where she cum from. But she sayd she was a stranger ther, she saw towns and towns one after the other threw the bus window, she sayd it was like she was watching a movie or TV, or may be when it was stoped it was like a old painting or some thing. But I think you maybe see more if your looking close at one place, real close, from difrent angles, than if your looking at a bunch of places fast, from far away. I gess it just seems to me that traveling shoud be wondring a round your own littel place, may be not wondring a round in someone elses.

seems almost like you got to say once and foral, This is my story, Im the main one in it, its all about me. So this is my place, no more wondring a round looking for other peples stories and other peples past. That dont mean you never change nothing, nor never have nothing to do with nobody elses story, I mean you cant just pretend theres no other storys but your own. But it just means you got your own place to come to rest at. well. I got my self sort of lost now, I dont no what I was trying to tell you, this being an arthor for me its prety purplexing

So anyhow it took Iph a long time befor she becum like her crow, she never actaully beleaved that she had her own story for a long long time. that is, she had her own story for a long long time but she never beleaved in it, for some reson she didnt think her story was worth wandring about.

Michel he said, you no the crow it wasnt all ways black, theres a story about the crow I heard it when I was in the South of here its a Soo story. but I cant tell it all its not mine. Ill just say The crow it used to be white as snow,

Allison Muri

that was back when the earth was still young. and he had a big mouth so hed ruin the hunt for the hunters and the peple they were starving they said we must teach that crow a leson so they tricked him and caught him. one of those hunters he was so angry he grabed that bird and threw him in to the fire. the crow he escaped but his fethers were burnt he was singed black as the nite. but he was a live and he never told on those hunters again niether.

Iph said, I dont no what that means to me I think maybe I shoud be wary of hunters I guess.

Well I dont no, it must mean something difrent for you than for them, said Michel, his face was turnt a way from her then and she couldnt read his face but she saw the tightness in his sholders the way they was all huncht up. there was only the tinyst little breeze whispering its self across the gras the crickets they were creaking every once and a while and a hawk he was a black dot circling round and round against the blue sky. and just then a littel gopher stuck his head out of his hole just a few feet aways and he whisseled his shrill warning. Michel he said I dont no exactly what it means but may be even if you dont no, may be it can still tell you some thing about some thing.

The hawk it was still sircling, a black dot in a blue sky It ws like a period at the end of a sentince but it wasnt so final, it just kept sircling

Iph said, My mother she told me a story like that when I was younger she said her grama told it to her. but its difrent, it tels you how a woman should behave. Like this

once upon a time the crow was whiter then snowy doves in the dove-coat or geese in the pond and this white crow was kept by a good Nite he was noball and good and he prized his crow dearly, he kept that crow in

the hystery of the broken fether

a golden cage. and the crow he would sing he had a beatiful voice then. and the noball Nite he also had a Lady that he loved dearly, he gave that lady a beatiful brass bed. but she was untrue to him she took a lover to there bed, this man he was low born. So when the good Lord Nite was gone hunting in his purple royal cape floating out behind him and riding his fine white horse she would take this man into the Nites brass bed, witch was rite be neath the gold cage with the white crow. well when the Nite cum home the crow he sang Cuckoo and he told the Nite, the Lord Nite he was so angry he just up and kilt his Lady for the vengents so he cou'd get justass for what shed done. Well as soon as he saw the blood upon her brest he was sorryfull and he turnt his rath upon the bird and he curst it he said you that was white will all ways be black that is your course it will show to every one your gilt. be cause your giltly it was you made me do this to my lady love.

Iph says, Maybe that means I should keep quiet I shoudnt tel nothing I might be punished for it. Michel says, Your the lady or your the crow? and Iph says, I dont no what I might be.

Well you no peples storys they can tell you whats the meaningful things in there lifes. like for the Soo peple it was getting food it was hunting the bufalo, they had to do that to stay a live. For the white peple it was some thing els.

Michel said, or theres an other one. My ma she told me it, its from my father it was told to him by his daddy and it was from his grama to. Once upon a time there was a princess she was pure. and she was walking by the ocean one day and the lord of the ocean he saw her and he wanted her, he was lusting for her. so he started chasing her, his purple cloak, that means roylty, was

whipping around in the wind as he pursued her. and she called for help but nobody would help her and finally she prayed to a goddess, this goddess was a virgin too. and so the goddess helped her she turned her arms into wings they had black feathers. and the princess felt a cloak on her shoulders only it wasn't a cloak, when she tried to pull it off she couldn't. and then she saw she wasn't running on the sand no more she was running over it she was rising into the air. she was saved because she became a crow and flew away.

Iphigeneia thought about that for a while it didn't really make sense. Finally she said, I don't know if that's being saved or if that's just being some thing different.

It doesn't matter, said Michel, because she got a way, she got a way to make her own story. That's what she did, she probably flew off and made another story about her self where she was the main one, she was making the story, it wasn't being done to her like in that other one.

Well. It seems I got myself really all muddled up now, I don't know what the connection of that is to my story that I'm telling you now. But anyway that's what they did, they told stories to each other, they made each other laugh, and they were friends. I guess that's important enough to tell no matter what else this is about.

Well. I'm pretty much tired out now, I think I'll have to take a rest pretty soon. My legs are aching a bit too. Because I was at the hospice this afternoon after lunch, I took a taxi over to St Pauls to see Dot. \$6.75 that cost me, I can remember when that would have been enough for groceries for a week. But anyhow, Dot, she didn't really recognize me so well. I told her, this is Indigo, she nodded, she said Oh yes? but I suspect she doesn't know me any more. But oh well, I told her what's going on at Eventide Gardens anyhow.

the hystery of the broken fether

Like old Peter Watuski hes been peeing into the potted poms in the hallways, lukly there silk tho. Nobody new for the longest time where that awful smel was coming from, they still woodnt exopt one of the maintennants crew he was out spraying the dandylions along side the bilding and here its almost fall all ready, but thats niether here nor there, Peter got him from his window on the 3rd floor. well Peter didnt mean to get him, turns out he, that is Peter, was watering the ferns too.

Most evry one I talked to about it they lookt all shocked and apolled, they get this look on there face like, There but for the grace of God go I, but that would of made Dot lagh. If I could of told her it 3 weeks ago, before she had the stroke. You see she didnt have much of a liking for Peter sincet he reached over from his alumenum walker at the New Yrs social last winter and pinched one of the purple print flowers on the behind of her dress.

Sure woodent mind harvesting me a armload of them prety things, he told her.

I coud see from rite acrost the room that she was thinking prety hard about wacking him over the head with her matching purple handbag, but she has a sirtaint amount of restrant. I wouldnt of been so cool but shes a real lady.

I think not, she sayd to him, and walked a way. Later she tolld me the way she did it, the way she kept herself from geting angry, was by imagining him actualy trying to do that. she imagened his harvesting implyment so to speak porbaly wasnt good for much at all. She was pictering him trying to get out of his pants by his self but hes so slow she could of gone shoping and come back home for tea befor he got his pants undone. She sayd it

Allison Muri

was all she could do to keep herself from busting into laghing rite there when she imagened that.

She usully laghs a lot but she dindt even smile when I told her, she was just lying there doing her raspy breathing, staring into the gray curtaints that was tugged around her bed for pryvacy. She sure didnt much look like her self what with her teeth out and no lipstick and that blue nightgown with big square fold marks stil in it acrost her chest and sholder. She woud never of worn that color before, she would of had some one pack up one of her own ones and send it along, and her wig they must of put in a bag with her closthe, I never saw her before without it since she started losing her hair a couple yrs back. Her hair it was pure white and wispy, I could see her pink skul shining threw it, and the blue vains

Then I was thinking how we used to lagh. We laghed in this Home here just like we did in my kichen over coffee some times, I sure been lucky to have a frend like her. after Mike died, the kids wer all long gone from home and having there own lifes, I needed her then. She used to come visit me in the Home here, that was befor she herself moved in. We talkt like we couldnt have done with our children, though she was really young enough to be my child. Some how, once women have children, they all get to be the same age, maybe. we was forchinat to be in the same place these last few yrs, God forgiv me for saying it, but shes been a beter frend to me these last yrs than Mike could of ever been. Some how, after we got married, we drifted away from being frends and into being companyones.

I remember how, when Dot first come to stay here, that bossy old Mrs. Olafson tried to tel Dot where she

couldnt sit in the dining room. Well. Dot just about up and skitterd away, she didnt no I was already siting down and watching, and so I flapped right over there and put my hand on her sholder and set her down agin. Thanks for saving me a seat, Dot, I was just coming to join you, I sayd, and I lookt real feerce into Mrs. Olafson's face. Mind you, Mrs. Olafsons a big woman, mitey big. Shes got a mustach with dark black hairs like cotton thread just hanging there on her lip. And shes mean. I just wanted to reach over there and grab hold of one of them things and yank it out and say, dont you ever look into the mirer, woman? anyhow, her lips they just gone thin like they was tucked in and stiched together. Humf, she sayd and she marched a way swinging her elbows like she was pushing her way through a herd of thirsty cows at the water trouf

Dot and me, we just gigled like we was in school. Or there was another time, that time when we was siting there having tea, along come Annie Smyth and Annie Taylor and standing by the kichen door where evry one coud see them. Now, there both a littel off, they have there good days, but there not all there, and I used to no Ann Smyth, she had a sharp tonge, she was real witty, all the men used to be scared of her. but now. Well. They was just standing there in there white nitegowns, wondering. Annie Taylor kept calling for the chickens, Heeeeeer chik chk chk chk HEEEEEEEEEEEEER chk chk chk chk, Heeeker chik, over and over agan, she was holding out her skirt like she had some grains in it to scater. Annie Smyth, she was right beside her, she was freting with her hands, she was starring off away somewheres but her hands was gathering up her skirt, gathring it all into a bunch at her waste. I dont think she even new she was moving, but prety soon there she was,

Allison Muri

showing off her underwear and pastey dumpling legs to the whole place. wel, it was sad realy, but for some darn reason me and Dot we couldnt stop gigling. And the more we lookt at each other and tryd to calm down to see the seriousness of it all, the more we laght, finally we was just laghing at our selves laghing. We had our hands over our mouths, but our ribs was starting to ake, so we up and shuffed out of there as fast as our old legs would shufle us, which was none to quik so by the time we got out into the hall we was hanging on to our chests and histerycal.

I was lying on my back gasping and Dot, she was trying to hall me up of the floor when the nurse come rushing out of the office, she thot I had a heart attack, we couldnt even talk to tell her I was fine, realy. They actully straped me onto a gurny and started weeling me away, Dot she was so upset then she couldnt speak stil and I was laghing so hard I was crying. I was shaking my head and waving my hands, There was too nurses then, they must of thot I was seeing sweet Jesus and the white lite by then. When we finally spit it out, the one nurse, she was so mad she sayd she was going to sedate us. We hightaled it bak to my room mitey quik after that, had a nice long game of rummy.

Then wile I was siting there beside Dot, thinking about al that, the nurse come in to Dots room, she was bussling in a hurry like those nurses al ways are, she had a orderly with her, he was dark with a mustash, he lookt like he was about 20 yrs old. She sayd, Time for your enema, Mrs. Lessworth, Joe here is going to help you now, just turn over on to your side. Then she looked up and saw me sitting there by Dots head. She must of forgot I was there, that woud be easy for them nurses,

there so busy, and I wasnt talking or anything, just siting there looking at my best frend in the wole world.

Im so sorry, were going to be busy here for ten fifteen minuts or so, woud you like to go to the cafetearya for cofee, you coud come back later if you like.

No thank you I sayd. I must be geting on home. So I folowed the purple dots back down to the entrance way, it had got cold and windy while I was visiting, the dead leaves were scratching and skitring al acros the paved ment. and wile I waited for the Number 2 Downtown bus out acros the street in front of the farmacy I coudnt get rid of that pictur, Dot lying on her side with her blue eyes all fogged over and staring in to the gray curtin pult around her for pryvacy.

I gess Ill stop now

So anyhow

About Sam. Now, Sam, he was nown all over the south of Saskatchewan, he was called in the paper once, many yrs later, a coweraegis bachelor and a confirmed women hater. Like that was something to be proud of. Wich he was, I gess, a bachelor. I gess by then evry body forgot about his wife, she was only here for a yr or so befor she died, and it wasnt realy comon descentcy to mentshin the other woman. And from then on he realy only livd for one thing, that was his ranch. By the time he died, he had bilt up one of the biggest spreeds in western Canada. So at the end he had 30 men working under him. He had maybe 5000 head of stock at the best time, but by 1917 that was al starting to dwindel away.

Now, it was Mike who tolt me this, he talkt to some of these ranch hands and this is how Sam made use of his catpidal. At the first, he had lots of money, he had solt some catle for big profets. So he used those to make

Allison Muri

more money. But he was finding it mitey hard to hire good young men, they wasnt so plentiful around then. so it was back around 1902-3, aprently he went bak home to England, hed go hang around in the pubs, hed pull out dolor bills and flash them around, hed buy the boys beer. now a dolor, that was a lot of money bak then and there eyes woud get big and wide. Sam, hed say, anyone who comes to Canada, this welth is theres for the takin. And the boys woud come out to work for him. And if there was one who was just that littel bit too caushious, why then Sam woud say, lissen here, Ill even pay youre faire, I need good strong workers like you, you mark my words, you go over there, youll be a welthy man. I spect some of those men, they got involved in shady deals, like they might of done some rum running for him later on, but mostly he needed men to tend to the live stocks, since those animals was like mony for him and needed to be kept alive

Those men, theyd ride around al by them selvs for days and days at a time, theyd ride rite thro blizzards wher you couldnt see nothing further than the ears on the horses head. My dad told me that one time, this horse stumbeld into the yard after a blizard like that, it found its way home and just stood there leaning against the barn door and its back was like a pile of ice and snow. and one of the hands, he was frozen on to the back of the horse, hed froze to death that way, when they took him down his knees were frozen into place wher theyd been lockt against the horses ribs. That was when he went out early spring to chek out the stock. Its like that too here. One day with spring all warm and shining on your bak, the birds al singing, the crocus peeping out al over from the brown grass turning green, you can even see the green earth reflected in the sky if youre out in the fields,

the hystery of the broken fether

then the next day its snow up to here and still coming down in big fat flakes Id sure like to see anothr crocus agin befor I die

So anyhow Sam, he was real careful that way about his stocks. He made up a tattoo that was on the jaw of evry critter he owned, sheep, catle, horses, even pigs it was a fether, it was stuck inside of a circel, and the tip of the fether was broken ofer. Nobody new why it was like that. the 76 Ranch was callt that because Sir John Lister-Kaye, when he bot his first herd, about 6000 range catle from the Powder River Ranch Company they al had that tatoo so he just kept it. Or the Turkey Track that seems obvious enough, there use to be wild turkeys all over down ther, theyr gon now tho. But old Sam Colridge he was prety cagey a bout his meanings, I coud never figur out what the heck he was talking about. He just sayd I calt it that so my stock dont get any ideas and run away on me

But thats niether here nor ther, Im missing the hole point, here, Im supose to be talking about the mistery.

It wasnt morn a day after Sams bawdy was lowerd in to the ground that the Lootennant Hitchdcock cum knocking on the Plumays dor. Wel how was he to no that was the morning The Western Chapter of the Canadian Catholic Ladies Aid Society had there monthly meeting. they had just started in on there tea and Iph was a bout to pass the date squares when the tapping came and the dor creeked open and Art Hitchdcock strode threw the porch and rite in to the front room rite in to the mids of twelve ladies all dressd for tea, at first he was only a tall shadow aginst the light shining threw the kichen windo behind his back. His hansome blue eyes sweeped over the room and it seemed to Iph they stabed into her eyes and looked threw rite down deep in side of her. Well Iph

she was easily flusterd then, she dropt the date squares and her Moms china flowrd plate it crasht to the flor into littel peaces, littel peaces of shrap pointy white chips all mixed together with crums of dark cake and all scatterd in the middle of the wood flor. Iph croched down to gather up all the peaces she was emberassed and red and she had went all hot so she hid her face a way from the offsir of the law. and he surely was a hansom man, like in a Romanse

Pardon me ladies he said. Miz Plumay, Coud I kindly speak to you for a few moments. Iph stood up then she was reddy to folow him in to the kitchen but then she saw he was standing a side to let her mother threw the dor and then he was folowing her, leaving the dor swinging its self closed on its hinges

SKEEK

skeekskeek skeek skee ske ske ske sksksksk I will remember that sound for as long as I live.

and then a sort of low clucking started as those twelve ladies all started in at once there eyes roling and there fingers fluttering. but to Iph it was all quiet like only a background music she coudnt destingwish any of the voices.

and then the SKREE of the front dor opening again and banging shut and Mary coming to stand in the dorway, her self a dark shadow for a moment. Well. she said. It seems the Lootennant is starting a ~~invest~~ inkweary into the deth of Sam Colridge. He wanted to no if I saw any thing od last week he wonderd if may be That Woman come back a round here

And then all them twelve ladies like jumpd strait up in the air and come down talking

the hystery of the broken fether

Iph went to the portch to get the broom, and she didnt say a singal word as she swept away the peaces.

Later that after noon, after them ladys had finisht there meeting wel they wasnt acturly having there meeting no more they was only salving the mistry after that. They al went home after they each had desided who was the gilty one. and Iph she was washing up the dishes and she was looking out the window at the brown hills and the blue sky, she was washing up a speshial plate from England it was bone china it was pure wite with pink English roses a round on the eyes. Her hand it was going a round in that sircle, sircling a round and a round on that plate and all the while her eyes they was seeing hills and brown gras and crows swoping a round.

Iph you dont stop wiping that plate, your gonna clean my English roses rite off of it, that was Iphs mother. So Iph she put it down then, she started to rinse off one of the plain brown cockery ones then, she was thinking a bout being out in those hils

One day in the spring, this was befor Sams deth. one day she and Michel had met out by Picnic Hill where there was only ever one picnic a yr, so they could be safe there no one ever went there any other time. be cause if they was ever caut together they woud be in truble, it wasnt proper. Michel he had some snuff and Iph tried it to. It lookt like rich soil, it felt like it to but it was probaly the most godawful stuf shed ever tasted. Shed rather have the lump of soil in her cheek. Iph imagened it was like having a mouth ful of cold horse shit exopt that woudnt make yor face go so hot.

Iph sayd to Michel, once when my Ma was expecting, this was when she was all ready heavy with the baby, she told me, Iph put yor hand on here. she took my hand

and she put it rite on her belly, on the side and underneath the ribs. Did you ever feel that Michel?

Michel, he was watching the crows chasing a owl he wasnt quite paying atension and he said Look at that there. Then he said, no, no I never did no womans never asked me to do that, and may be if she did I woudnt want to any way.

Iph says, well you shoud its truly a most asiting thing its more asiting then catching a grate big fish on a hook when your fishing at the crik. Iph she was feeling a littel bit flushed, she felt a littel like she was flying herself. She pukered up her mouth and spit brown water into the gras at her feet. exopt she was aiming for the rock where Michel had spat his in a graceful ark.

whats so citing about it? says Michel

Not citing, sayd Iph. Its like a seeing, its when you see some thing its not real but its mor real than any thing you coud tuch with yor hands. Its a new way of looking at things.

and she sayd, I coud feel the kick. it was tiny and feebul but stil it was strong and full of life its little leg just slid rite a cross her belly, on the other side from me, the in side of her. and it was like all of the sudden I was joint again with my mother and my granmother and my grate granmother and all those mothers back threw time. It was like wandring rite to my home without ever having bin lost. all of the sudden I coud almost feel again what it was like to be in side of my mother, she was my home and I was a part of her, almost, but I was my self also. there I was I was sensing her tearors and not only that, the joy to, they was tumbling a round in side of her. Once there was a bridge it conected me to her.

Iph never got embarased then before she new what it was all a bout, she just told Michel like he was her diary

or some thing thats the way teenaged girls are. she said, Its funy, I was more intimit with her than I been with any body. I come out threw her most intimit place. and all of the sudden I was out side seprate from her body her hart beat it wasnt the music in my vanes and my ears no mor, her ribs was no longer my roof. Iph, she sayd that to him and she was looking up at the sky, at the clouds that was moving over her, she felt like the erth was spinning beneath her.

Michel he was paying atension then he probaly hadnt herd any thing like that before. he said iether thats the most beatiful thing I ever heerd or its the crazyest or its the most disgussding. But Michel he didnt lagh at her tho. He said that sounds may be like a power you have to make a dream flite like that.

Usully Iph she was thriled when someone said some thing like that, when she was that age thats all she wanted to here, that she was speshil, that she may be had powrs that no body els had. She was aiking to here that. and she was aiking to be intimit with a nother person who thot that a bout her self, not intimit as in leting him to her body but may be a bout leting him in to her self. wel Michel, he woud of most likely missed understood and they woud of dun the grapling that most yung peple end up doing at some time or an other and Iph she woud of lernt some thing of the nature of men. So may be this hole story woud of been diffrent may be that day woud of changed fucher events. if she hadnt tried snuff for the first time that day. because befor Michel even finished talking, Iph was bending over, onto her hands and knees, and she was puking black in to the gras

Michel, he didnt tern a way niether, he just put his warm hand softly on her back rite be tween her sholder blades and then when she stopt he pusht her hair off

Allison Muri

from her moist and cold brow, he laght but not in spite and he put her head on to his chest.

Iph said you no I never kissed my mother nor she me since I was a tiny littel girl.

wel speaking of puking

It was a few monts after Sam's funreal that Iph came a ware that she was carying a child. Shed been oh so tired and draggy a round the house and she thot it was the flu when she puked three days in a row rite after brekfast. Then she re membered she hadnt had the course for some time. and then she felt the movement in side which at first she thot was just stomach rumblings but then she new it was a leping in side it was a new life dancing in side. She said while she was washing up after supper one night,

Ma I got to talk to you.

But she shoud of nown better a bout talking to her mother then. Mary she was busy it was one of those days where you plan to do the wole pile of mending and then you dont do nothing but run a round putting out little fires all the wole day you dont even get a singel momen to sit down and rest and drink a littel cup of hot tea. the baby was having a tantrum he wanted to smash the plates on the flor and Joe he was tanting Rachel and Elizabeth and they were screeming to. Mary was making yeast, she was boiling wild hops in water and grating in raw potato, flour and sugar. It sure smeled awful, but that brew it would foam and buble and rise yr bread and buns sure and quick.

Mama! sayd Iph.

Dont bother me rite now cant you see I got cont'cerns. did you go and feed those chickens like I told you go and do that and while your at it you mite consider

the hystery of the broken fether

your duties youv ben slacking off of late and you better smarten up be for I tell your father. and so thats what she did she put on her old brown over coat and out in to the snow where the night shone blue on the wite all glinting and sparkling. and then in to the coop it was brown walls and brown straw brown chickens chukling over there brown eggs. It was warm in there and it smeled of shit.

God how she hated them chickens there brown and white fethers in the dirt and there brown and wite shit every where and on her shoes when she fed them and on her hand from the water dish she picked up to set right and fil and there squabbling complaning voyces and there red eyes rolling around in there empty little heads. Hens didnt no shit all. they didnt no nothing they just scrached dirt and laid eggs and shit and let that busy old rooster with his emty wobbling sac under his chin lord over them and put his little red seed in to the sunshiney yellow of the eggs they made. them chickens they couldnt even of flown if they wanted to but she spected they didnt want to, they seemed to like living in their shitty stinking dark little coop and they liked their rooster and the other hens all about them selves all brooding and clucking and preening. brrrrr UCK UCK UCK brrrrrrr bakbak brrUCK, those gabbling voyces al going at once in the background like as if they thot they was contributing some thing to the whirld.

they was domasticated thats what they were

So Iph she never told her mother nor her father but of corse they noticed after a time any way. Mary she cryed and cryed. It seemed not be cause she was shamed of Iph but more like she was vexed with her self. because she was to busy to stop and tel her dotter til it was to late a bout being a women now she had to skip that part and

tel her a bout being a mother. like she mite of told Iph to hold off, a man mite not keep his promises if he and you is both young and then where woud you be hed go off and make his own life but you woudnt have that fredom youd have to find some one to keep you and feed you its not so easy. and even if he will keep you his self you mite find hes not the man you thot he was. but it was to late for that now. and Mary she was may be seeing how Iph was following in her foot steps she was remembering how she her self used to want to be a peenist she was looking rite at her old piano at the dust on its cover, at the nikhaks, the vase with its pink twisted paper flwor that she had made back when she was a yung bride. and also at the salt and peper shakers shapet like a man and a woman, he with a corn pipe and blue suspenders and pants and she with a blue skirt and yelow kerchief and a pail of yelow grain, and painted in brod strokes so the yelow went on to the pail where blue shoud of been and there eyes went biger than the shape for them, they wer dusty to. none of her kids played it niether, there wasnt mony for lessens nor time for Mary to teach them

and Abe he raged. he was an impotent man in the comunity, he was on comiteas, he was an elder in the church by then, if he didnt get Iph married quik hed be shamed. thats not what he said but you coud tell he was thinking a bout it. but not only that he looked on Iph as pure and it hurt him to think that some body had tuched his dotter that way. and most likely he new deep down that he hadnt gave Mary the best life she coud of had. her hands that use to be wite and delicat they were red and raw from washing closthe and dishes and flors. and her face was red and chaped from the dry wind blowing a cross the prayry. she had disappointment lines on her face from frowning and scowling and scolding she use to

the hystery of the broken fether

gigle, she use to be giddy. He probaly didnt want to think of his dotter getting those lines on her face but of corse he didnt under stand it wood hapen any ways no matter what. he figgerd that those lines was a punishmen for the sin. If you was pure when you maried then you had a better chance. if you maried be cause you had to then God mite not be so kind.

The next Sunday Iph when she met Michel by the damn it was one of those cold clere days when it feels like your hair coud freez and snap rite off of your hed. Her hair it was sticking out from the eges of her tooke it was turned al wite and frosty, her eye brows they was coverd in frost to. She was shivring and her teeth clattring, her lips was pinched and red and her face was wite like she was ill as if she had le prosy or some thing. She was coming up to where Michel stood and in between them was the dry brown stiks of a caragana hege, it was like they was looking at each other threw bars of a cage even tho no one was inside any more than the other one, they was just on the opcit sides. She whisseld 3x to let him no she saw him, she waved, and she walked up to him.

The game's done, she sayd. Its all over for me

You look like Death sayd Michel, and Iph she started to shake,

But Im a life she cryed. and then she told him, Im in big truble and I got no one to turn to. and she started to sob, not with tears at first but with big gasping breths that she coudnt stop from inspiring in the frigid aire. Michel he tried to joke her out of it he sayd What, was it you who wacked old Sam over the hed with a ax? Iph she started realy to cry then, with lots of tears and her wole body was shudring. She held her hand over her belly. oh. said Michel, I suppose I no what it is you mean your realy in

truble like some ones got you in truble like some man. And Iph she stoped shaking tho she was stil crying and she noded her head.

You got no one to turn to its like that? he asked. and Iph she coud only nod. Well Michel he wasnt so new to these kinds of sityouashens and so he wasnt shoked or ful of lothing for her or nothing like that. he just squinted a way in to the pale sun and kicked at the snow, he made a brand new foot print al by its self in the snow in be tween of two caragannas, and the both of them stood there looking at it.

Id Mary you, he sayd.

Well Iph she just started to lagh. she must of been just a littel wee bit hysterycall be cause she coudnt stop, not for a long time, and Michel, he just started in to laghing rite along with her. So they sat in the snowbank and howled like there was a ful moon out or some thing and then for a wile after that they chukled a way like they was those stupid chickens or some thing. And Michel, he gave Iph a big hug. so she sayd, woud you realy?

Yes sayd Michel, I aint got no work here no more we coud move a way together we coud go up north where theres trees, its real prety, and I no some peple up there, I coud get a job, we coud get a real prety litel house, we coud have a famely.

So Iph sayd OK, Ill tel my mom and my dad, we will have a tiny weding, only just your friends and my famly and Ill wear my moms pink lace dres. Of corse Iph didnt no nothing about it.

Just the same as me, when I got maried and changed my name I thot Id be freeing my self to fly to exprience the wirld like I never done before when I was under my moms wing. I thot may be Id be come like a new person,

and so I guess I was a little bit free for a while to but what goes a round cums a round and if I flew the coop it was may be just to go to a difrent one. be cause it wasnt to long be fore I had my ferst dotter I had Barbara, she was born May 24, 1918, imagen that, and then ten monts later it was Anna and a yr folwing that was John.

I re member being at a weding when I was a yung girl and the paster he made a sermon on how the time before a ~~mirage~~ marige its like wandring and lost in the dry desert un til when you meet your true love and you find blist and piece in the Pormissed Land. but I never new until I was Married that, pardon me for being crude, but some times you just gotta tel the truth for pitys sakes, I never new that the land of Milk and Hony, that was my milk and my hony, it cum from me, it wasnt for me.

Well. and so anyhow Mike and me we sleept a part for wile, me with Barbara and Anna in our bed, the baby beside us in his basket on the flor, and Mike in Barb's littel cot but that aint no way to have a marage and prety soon we was together again so three yrs after that I had Betty, and then it was three yrs agin until I had Robert. well I also had too missedcarriages in between of Betty and Robert, and after Robert to, I spect my body it was prety wore out. I wasnt even 30 yet, I had 5 littel ones, it seems like a dream when I think of it now, getin up evry morning to do the chores, the washing. o, the washing I did, the kids they was prety good but I no I gave them a few tonge lashings I wasnt to pashent with them some times, I feel bad about it now. I acshly dont remember vary much of the detales of them yrs, it went by so fast and I was abslutely drained most of the time. and may be Im doing my self a faver, be cause what I do remember is feeling like I was losing my self, like I wasnt a person no more but only a mother

Allison Muri

I always thot until I was maried that when I went a way from home that my life it woud just open up and I coud just pic and choose from al the oportunity that was oferd but in stead it just semed to close up for an other few yrs or so, a hole other life time. and I wasnt the sort of girl who ever wanted to be a houswife, I thot I mite do grate things. not that I woudnt of wanted to have any of my childern, I loved them all moren any thing, may be those kids was the best project I ever coud of had. We all had some marvelous times together, we laght more than we cried for sure. But stil

Well in the end I got my self back for a wile when the kids went to scool. Altho. by that time I was prety much consirned with house work and Mike he liket homemaid bred beter than store bot, he liket meat and potatos and too kinds of vegetables for super. some times it seemed that all my life I was spending peeling potatos. evry time I sort of come awake to it, there I was again, or may be stil, frying ground pork with salt and peper and a bit of chopt onion, throwing the spuds in to the boiling salted water, runing bak and forth to chek they didnt boil over, tosing the meat in to the dutch oven, and wisking up a heeping cup of flour, pinch of salt, 2 eggs and a cup of milk to pore over the hamburger and then pop it in to the hot oven, and shreeding letus and chopping sellery, and also scolding milk for the puding. and that was allways when the littel ones they was geting cranky, there was allways one or to hanging on to my legs and crying. seemed like I was al ways sweeping up the same dirt, over and over and over again, picking up the same toys, mending the same socks. it seemed like nothing I did was worth nothing but even so at the same time it had to be done, other wise evry thing woud go to ~~hell~~ pot. and no body but me seemed to no it or care. So there was my

the hystery of the broken fether

body, doing these things for other peple, and my mind it seemt a stray

Some times it was the marage that was like being a lone in a wilderness, like my mind was wondring in a parched land, my self was lost and hungry.

But then I dont no what els I mite of done any way. It was prety much thats what you did if you was maried and a wife with childern. and it was prety much a nevertable that you woud get maried. thats the way it was. well may be thats the way it stil is for most of us no mater what those cigrette avertazemens say. Youve come a long way baby, thats what it says but I figger if youv come a long way then your not no body's baby no more.

Im looking that last bit over now, it sounds like Im being bitter. But thats not it. I had a prety good life, considring

speaking of which, that brings me bak to the mistory. Abe he roled his own cigrettes most men did at that time, so one mourning in Janwary it was one of those brite suny days, he was siting in the cold clere lite he was warming his self by the stove after hed done his chores, and waiting for the biskets for dinner. he pinched out a wee bit of tobaco he was setting at the kichen tabul he brushed the bits that fel on the tabul into his hand and ever so carefly he brushed them in to the paper to and then he liked it along the edge and roled it up and twisted the ends together, it took him as long to role a cigarette as it took Mary to sweep the kichen flor when she movet al the chairs aside and evry thing. anyways. hed just roled his self a cigarette and Mary was just putting away her broom when Olie Knut come nocking at the dor.

Comon in hollerd Abe from the tabul, your gonna frez your knob off standing out there. So in he cum.

Yup he sayd. Looks like that there investation that the Mounies are conducking its took a new turn. So then he sayd I sure woudnt say no to a cup of cofee and down he sat and he told Abe and Mary all the gosip hed heerd. Wel it seemed that the Mounties theyd bin looken for that Indian woman, wel he probaly calt her some thing more indescent, but anyways, he sayd they bin looking for a long time but they didnt get no leeds on her and they was starting to think that may be she probaly wasnt the one who done it. No body had achshuly seen her for yrs and they wasnt even sure of a motif. But turns out Sam hed made a few enemaes a round here, mostly with some of the sodbusters who was as ornry as he. Hed had some arguemens over cattle and such like, his ranged all over and some times rubed down fentses and ate farmers grane, what they was wanting to sel or save for there own seeds. but he thot they was taking his land and his busyness a way from him so he aparently didnt even care. So the new theery was that Sam hed gon and had some run-in with a farmer and things got al heated up until one day that farmer he just snaped, he went and took his revenge on Sam.

Anyways I hope they find the bugger that done him in sayd Olie, Justass must be dun. This trajetty must be ravenged. Some body otta hang for it.

So thats how it was, now yung Art Hitchdcock he was riding a round and a round the cuntryside again, and again he wasnt cumplishing nothing. He couldnt find nothing, couldnt finger it out at all. he was going on with his questchins like he didnt relize peple new they was his suspects, so no body was teling him nothing and stil there

he was just going a bout on the King's busyness, all solom and impotant.

Now it was around this time when Iph told her plan to her parents and they was downrite horified. Abe he loved his dotter dearly but he said sometimes a mans gotta put his foot down and there aint no God dammed way Im gonna let my dotter mary a breed.

Now Iph she missed the point, she broke in to say, aint you half bred your self, aint your mother Scotch and your dad English?

That dont make no difrents, you no thats not the same thing at all, hollerd Abe. You no you wont have no monny no property not no respect, among other things like whats this fellows family like you dont no because youv never even saw them befor and this fellow aint never lived in one place for moren a few monts at a time. How dyou no he hasn been in trubbl with the law?

Well Iph she didnt no nothing a bout the law nor a bout leagility, she didnt even no what a justass of the piece was. But she new Michel and she new he was good, she new hed never struck a nother person, she new him wel enough to no that he never lied.

But Abe he woudnt beleave her. Besides which, Abe new of a fellow lived over by way of Ernfold hed herd of, Mr Ramseze, his second wife jus dead last sumer she got drownt in the wel, he had three kids needing a mother and besides he had mony, he had a prosprou farm. May be hed take a wife as young and prety as you he probaly woodnt blink at a nother baby in the house niether. Abe wasnt a crule man nor a hard one but he had a temper and he new what was at stake. He new niether he nor his wife coud never hold up there heads again not in Morse not in Swift Current no not even on there own farm and whats more they couldnt aford to keep a grown woman

and her ill-begot child they had there own family to worry about to feed and cloath. And then whats going happen when him self and Mary got to old to be working are you going make your brother Joe support you then. and Joel want to mary some one his self and have his own family here there woudnt be room. You got to think of these things. You done made your bed and now you got to lie in it. If you want to go trasping around the cuntryside leting this Michel whoever he is do al those dirty deeds on you, then thats one thing. But if you think your just going to mary him befor the hole cumunity, then thats quite another, yung lady.

Some times you got to make a Sacofice, he sayd. thats in Christs teachings. You got to honer your father and mother to so dont give me no back talk or Ill get out the lether strap

Wel Abe was the man of the house and it seemed like it was a nevertable then, like nothing woud ever be able to change, like thats how it was and you couldnt do nothing about it but just shut up and live with it, you dont no if you shoud lagh and shrug it off your sholders or if you shoud wail with the unfaresness of it al. But thats the way life was, it seemt like so ofen you couldnt change nothing, you just wer expectit to sit there and let things happen to you

sort of like you no how it is when the blood dribbles down your legs, wel that aint happent to me for a long time now, a wole life time, but I remember it wel. and you no even though its a inconvenyence and some times its pain, but also that it means your ripe and your reddy to grow. but then its not you its your body and its a shame full thing but you cant controle it its like you use to be a person with a body to run in and dance in but then you become a woman and then in sted your a body with a

the hystery of the broken fether

person in side like your turned in side out. and even then its not so a mazing as when all of the sudden theres some thing growing in you its not you tho and your bodys just growing it for you and your body starts to tell your mind what to do. And you always thot it woud always be the other way around.

Like when my 2nd was born, that morning all I coud think to do was clean the house and I washed the flor and folded the dipers and tidied up the toys and bathed my self and then by noon my limbs spread and my insides clamping down and my mouth screaming even tho my mind was just sitting a part and waching and wondering, and my body pushing and spreading and some where deep on the in side of me was renching open and all I coud do was sit back and watch and feel it hapening to me and then in the afterwords all you can do is drible blood and leak out milk from your brests, all stretcht and marked and with blue vains all over and suddenly drooping. just like my mothers, once I saw them flat on her chest but hanging low and full way down by where her waste would of been.

and your hair falling out its all over the house your closthe the babys blankets and the milk dribling staining dark on your blouse which is also a shame full thing. not only that theres the healing you cant sit down at the kichen chairs and if you start to pee you cant stop the drible coming out no matter where you are. and you dont no why but when you sit by your self in the rocker in the dark with your teat hanging out and your baby bunting at you like a calf at a cow, tugging and sucking, choking and raging then latching on again and staring at you with no expression but just watching, and your held down there in the chair by those eyes, you just weep. may be you weep for your past and for your fucher and for

Allison Muri

what love has brouht you to. May be you weep be cause you have your own baby a live and snugled in your arms. you just dont no

sort of like that, those things just hapent to you, no mater what you did to get away

Well Iph she had to tell Michel no there was nothing to be dun they werent to see each other no mor niether. Her mom and dad they thot it was his baby they never thot no one woud offer to take care of a spoilt woman and her basterd child if he wasnt the responsible one for it. And they never for a momen thot that Iph and Michel acshully had a love for one a nother. They mite of even thot Michel didnt have honrabbble in tensions toward there dotter.

But Abe and Mary they didnt under stand a bout what a marige could be. Dont get me rong here, I never had a particleary blistful marige my self. Wel altho its not like I ever wanted to leave, Mike and me we never hated one an other or nothing like that, he was good to me, he was one of my closest frends I was probly as close to him as I could be to an other person. But somehow it seemed like a lot of the time we didnt under stand one an other. like we used the same words but some how they didnt mean the same to me as they did to him. and not just be cause he liked to talk a bout dies for hides and stamping picturs into lether and stuf like that about sadles over super and I talked back a bout the baby's poop.

whod of thot that poop woud be come so important to a person. I sirtaintly never woudv suspectit when I left home to get married. but you kno when you have a cuple littel ones your mind kind of turns to that its be cause thats what you spend so much of your time doing, your

cleaning shit out of dipers. we use to line them with old rags, which if they was too dirty wed toss them out, but there was stil plenty of scrubing on the washbored fierst to get the worst off, then of corse we woud wash them in the good water but not in a washing mashin like they have now, it was sort of like a butter churn, so I use to have prety strong arms bak then and my hands they was al red and nobby, the fingers was al ways craked from being in the water al the time. I spect thats why I have such a time with them now, I got aurtheritis, I gess I just wore them rite out. wel so on washing day first wed do al the wites and then the towels and stuf and then finely the dipers, you coudnt do them first of corse, be caus we use to be mor careful how much water we used, it didnt just come runing out of a tap. And you didnt have a seprate room for washing or nothing so you did it in the kichen along side of the stew you was making for super, I dont kno why I didnt just go rite round the bend some times. so anyways you coudnt help but to be cont'cerned about if the little ones had runy yelow or hard brown, not only be cause thats what youd be scraping off the dipers with a old nife but also be cause it also told you if they was helthy or not. The kids not the dipers. but of corse Mike he didnt realy get that, he just thot it was disgusseding and mor than once he told me I needed some tabul maners, but there you are

But there you see I got my self off track again, I was talking about how we seemt like we didnt under stand each other.

but at least there was plentie of momens when me an Mike we were frends to not just man and wife. Abe and Mary they thot there marige was good but they was holding it up against Sams or the other homsteders a round who were just like they was themselvs. But they

Allison Muri

never had a good marriage, so far as I could tell. I mean they were faithful and all, they lived together until they died but still. They hadn't much time to spend in one another's company. They never took a walk together in the spring with their children the snow all melted a way and every thing that new colour of green that's so tender and small and fresh. with the wind fresh to with that smell of wet growing earth and the sun so warm on your face you take off your coat for the first time since the last fall. and watching the geese coming back flying in there V, magpies, crows, robins, whippoorwills, bluebirds, linnets, yellow warblers, gold finches, brown thrashers, all hopping on the grass hiding in the trees and swooping in the sky, orioles in the ditches, meadow larks singing, swallows, blackbirds, king birds, sparrows. and holding hands I don't think I never saw Abe and Mary holding hands.

Dots hands, they won't grasp it like they don't want to hold nothing no more. I was holding her hand this afternoon when I went to visit her, I squeezed it and talked to her but she didn't seem like she knew I was there. Her hand it was white and it drooped, the fingers curled round just a little, and bent a bit, it looked like a dead wilted flower and my own hand clutched around it, it looked like a nobby old bird claw. Seized on to her tit and never wanting to let go

Because when I got there today I was taken a bit by surprise it was because I haven't been by for a week or so, I didn't know she was in such bad shape, she took a turn for the worst. She was lying asleep flat on her back, without her teeth in, her face looked like it was a skull, her white cheeks all sunk in around her cheek bones, her mouth all drawn in like some one was on the inside of her, pulling

the hystery of the broken fether

her in side of her self threw the mouth. The face around her eyes, it was settled back too, her eyeballs rose out of the huge hollowed out eye sokets, and her thin wite hair it was trailed out around her face on the blue pillowcase. but what realy threw me for a loop was her feet. they wasnt coverd by the bed spred, they was out and on top of a pillow they wer raised up I gess to help the circlation in her legs, and the covers must of slippt back. Becaus they didnt look like her feet, they didnt look like they belonged to her, they was wite and puffy, they had no foot shape they were more like lumps of wite wax and they were just that littl bit shiny like wax too.

I dont no where her kids wer. Shes got two, they dont usully visit her too often, they both have busy lives. And it just snowd real hevvy last week to, I no thats why I havent ben by in a while. that first wet cold, it awlys sezes me right up so I cant hardly move. I dont no, they must visit her to but I havent ever seen them, tho there was some beutiful flowers last time I was here. Thats why I coud of busted in to tears when all the suden she started in to singing in this husky whispry voice. I couldnt reconize the tune but I coud only just here the words she was singing.

*Hush littel baby
Dont say a word
Momas gona buy you a
Moking bird.*

Funny how that woud stick with you for so long. Id of swore shed be singing Just a closer walk with thee, at a time like this.

Allison Muri

But I gess its may be not so peculyr after all. Becaus you no, thers lots of things that I miss here in this retirement home but one of the things I miss the most from my old life, thats sitting in my old wooden rocking chair, rocking my babies to sleep. I rocked all my five children there, I rocked my granchildren there, I even rocked some of my great granchildren in it. and all those babies they woud snugle in to the crook of my arm or theyd lay there hed on to my brest, there hair so soft and fine, I wish I coud tuch a babys hed right now, I wish I coud smel that sweet smel. Altho. Some times when I was yung and sitting in that chair I felt traped, partly be cause I coundt get up and put the baby down with out its waking up and screeming again, but also be cause I sort of felt be wilderd that here I was al of the sudden this mother with chilren, and it wasnt just me I was living for no mor. it was a bit of a shock to relize that Id changed that way. I dont think I was ready to have the children when I did. So its funny thats one thing I miss the most, the smel of a littel new born baby in my arms.

*shoo shoo shoo shoo la la
put your littel cares a way
shoo shoo shoo shoo la la
to morrow its a nother day*

*shoo shoo shoo shoo la la
close your littel eyes of blue
shoo shoo shoo shoo la la
pretty dreams will come to you*

I remember holding Barbara in my arms and looking down at her, she was looking back up at me. She even did have blue eyes, she was the only one of my five that did,

the hystery of the broken fether

the rest were dark. she sort of lookt like she new what I was singing to her, she was so solom, shed stop sukling for just a moment or to like she was wating for me to go on, then shed start up again but she woudnt close her eyes un til Id sung it thro once at least.

*long ago
when I was a child
my momy sang the sweetest
lull a by*

Its true to. My mother she sang lulabys to all her littel ones, she sayd she lernt them from her mom, who nos how far they went bak.

*dont you no
that I love you so
so hush my littel darling
go to sleep*

That was my favrite song, I stil like to hum it. I cant sing no mor tho, my voice its prety much wor out.

Mike, his favrite song of corse it was difrent from mine it was a cow boy song.

*As I walked out on the streets of Larado
As I walked out on Larado one day
I spied a young cowboy all dressed in white linen
All dressed in white linen as cold as the clay.
His hat was turnt bak and his spers were a jingling
and as he aproacht he was singing this song.*

*I see by yor outfit that you are a cow boy
These words he did say as I boldly walked by
Come sit here be side me and here my sad story
Im shot in the chest and I no I must die.*

Allison Muri

When Abe first cum out to the Wild West — thats what he calt it, it was suppose to be a pun on the Wild West in the States where all the men went a round shooting each other be cause there wasnt any gun laws. Here in Saskatchewan there was laws to stop that kind of thing and there was the North West Mounting Police so when Abe said wild it was kind of an irony statemen which I gess means it was some thing that said one thing and ment some thing els and so you had to iron it out in your mind. He also ment that out here in the west it was wild it was a wilderness it wasnt cultivated it wasnt tamed. there was no bildings no trees, only a few smal herds of antelopes and wite taild deer. And prayry chickens, they was al over to, some times theyd move closer to the barn for the feed. One of those birds made a nice diner for one person. Any ways when Abe first cum out here it was all prayry and he had to clame his quarter of land and put up fentses on it so you could tell it was being clamed he had to break the soil he had to plow it. seems kind of funy that way, how usully breaking some thing is a bad thing, why woud you cal it that if you was doing some thing sposed to be good. you also sayd that about horses or some times men woud say it a bout women, it was just a joke. Anyways Abe he didnt have no horses yet but the naybors was all helping each other out that one year and they broke the earth with there oxen and mettl blades.

Well. so anyways they conkered the frontear but Abes land it was mostly sandy and hily and nevr produsted much grain. he never had many vary good crops exept in the best yrs when it rained enuff for the seed to sirvive the heat of the sun. So a lot of his land is pascher land its for the catle to graze now. They grow a little wheat a little barly still down in that area but this yr the crops probaly a rite-of, it didnt rain all summer and now its rained all

fall till freezing so what did manage to grow it just rotted. One of Abes grate gransons and one grategrate grandson there farming it now but where there fields are its mosely sand the dirts blown a way they had it on the news one night, it looked like a desert it had big dry craks in it, I sware it lookt like rinkles on a old wore out face. and they intervewd them and all. The boys they remind me of Abe. the ones lethery and hard like Abe was when I last saw him and he sounds like some body cheated him of some thing, and the other hes how Mary talked about Abe, hes pink faced and apple cheeked and hes ready to face what ever the fucher mite be.

Anyhow speaking of the fucher, thats where I left off it was with Abe saying no god dammed way and Iph wondring how her life was going to turn out. Shed seen Mr Ramseze once or twice, he was a big man he had a belly that stuck out in the front of him it lookt solid like on a steer thats ben fatted up for slatter but his face it wasnt so docile like that his lips had kind of a sneer on them always you no those shape of lips that the tops turned down into the bottom one which its thin and sharp and pointy like. He had wee tiny eyes they peered out from puffy pokets of his skin. Thats mostly all she rememberd about him. But she rememberd his first wife, she was thin and small and with huncht sholders, she never smiled.

Well Iph didnt want to mary Mr Ramseze, she new that but she didnt think there was no other opshuns that was a time when a fathers word it was the law. So Abe he started planing a trip over to Ernfold then he thot hed best get this hole thing clered up be fore to long. And off he went the very next day that it was suny and brite and not looking like there woud be a blizerd. Wel he left rite after brekfast, the sun was barely up and Iph she couldnt

hardly think about nothing else that day or the next 2 that he was gone. she was doing the mending that day that he got back home, all afternoon she was sitting there by the window darning and darning and hoping Mr. Ramseze was may be not interested in an other new wife, may be hed found him self a new one already by him self. and poking that needle in and out, in and out, the thread it was going a round and a round threw the cloth.

Well Iph she was still mending by the lamp in the kitchen when Abe came in late after supper time. The freezing cold air it came rushing in past her, it whispered its self around her and chilled her to the bones and Abe he just stamped the snow off of his boots and came in to set down by the table. He smelt of that cold outside smell and of his horses and a little of some kind of alcohol. Mary she came in to the kitchen then, she didnt say nothing but she wanted to hear what hed say.

you wont believe it he said, turns out Sam hes looking worse and worse every day since he died.

Now Lieutenant Hitchcock hes gone and give up on that theory of his that a angry farmer done him in. Done in Sam I mean. He couldnt find no one person who had a motive and a opportunity. but heres whats interesting, Hitchcock hes been uncovering all sort of unsavoury particulars about old Coldridge. Seems that the Mountie he went on a bender one night he and some other officers of the law they was celebrating some thing or other they got kind of loaded up one night in Moose Jaw and Hitchcock he ended up telling a sordid lady about his business. Of course he didnt know that lady was also regularly visited by one of Sams own boys. Im telling you, this is rite from the horses mouth, I met Sams forman Dusty in town before I come home, hes had a bit of

freed time on his hands now that Sam got laid forever in the ground.

So anyways he, Hitchdcock not Sam, told that lady all about there latest suspissions not noing that the next time she saw old Dusty shed pass it rite along to him. So Dusty he past it onto me, Abe sayd.

Seems Sam was big into the russling busyness, evry yr a round spring time hed meet up with some of his associates and ride off in to the sun set, hed leaf the ranch with Dusty in charge, hed be gon for a cuple weeks some times. Well theyd just go out in to the hills and trees and theyd round up any mustangs they coud find, theyd herd off 20, 30 at a time, becaus you no ranchers they just let there animals rome until the spring time, if they kept trak and saw some was mising theyd just think them horses didnt make it threw the winter. then Sam and his boys theyd take them horses all a way down south acrost the border, then theyd sel them, they made reel good mony too.

So anyways Hitchdcock he thot may be that Sam was got into truble with one of those russlers, may be got in to some confruntashin over there bootie or some such thing. Dont that beat al? You think you no some one, sayd Abe.

Wel Mary she finely had to ask him what about Iph

Evry things al rite he told her, and Mary she started in to crying. Iph she didnt no what he ment.

Al rite, whats that mean? al rite like I dont have to get married or al rite like you dont have to face me no more?

you mind your maners sayd Abe, if you dont lern now then your husband wil have to teach you. and Mary, she turned a way then she started some water in to boiling for Abes tea, she nelt in front of him and she pult the boots off of his feet, her gentle face down by his old

Allison Muri

woolen soks, they was steaming with the heat from his feet. Abe he leant bak in his chair with his eys closed, he sayd itl do you good to be maried, its time some body made you mind

Wel Iph she turned a way then and she went into the bedroom that she shared with her yunger sisters, she never got undressed tho, she just layed down on top of the bed, quiet so as not to wake them up. And you no thats the last time Iph ever saw her father, she didnt see her mother for sevral yrs after, thats the last pictur she kept for ever in her mind of the 2 of them together. Abe with his eys closed leaning back in his chair and Mary with tears on her face neeling down to take his boots off.

Because that very nite Iph she left. You no some times you just gotta make that leap you gotta run and jump for it and even tho you might fall into the gap or you might just barely scrable over to the other side may be you might just fly but there aint no way youl no unles if you jump off from that stony cold ridge. Unles if you leav the ground first.

So Iph she didnt have much to take with her, she just had two workday dreses and one for church. she put them in to a flowr sack, and her good shoes, and some undergarmens. Then she wated un til she herd Abe and Mary go to there bed, she lissened to the SKWEE, skweee skwe skeskskskeekskeek sk

that was the creaking of there bed, she wated until they had got them selves comftable she wated until she coud here Abe snoring she wated just a littel longer for Mary to go to sleep and just a littel mor for good luk. and finely she creept down the stares, she went out in to the portch and she put on her hevy wool sweter, she pult on her over coat, her tooke, her scarf up over her nose and

the hystery of the broken fether

a round her for head, her big hevy boots and finely her wool mits. And she easied open the front dor and out she gone into the cold January nite. just like that.

Wel I gess I shoud get to the point shoudnt I, Im afrayed Im just not a vary good story teler. I shoud tel you why the hystery of Sams ranch went like it did, I mean with Sam geting kilt and al. This is sposed to be his history isnt it, its sposed to be the anals of Sam. Wel, his catpidal it was just pieced up then, after his departurition from this world, his lifestock they was sold and the mony it was mostly needed to cover his dets, his land that he owned it was sold to, that mony payed for funreal expensis, the preecher and the barial, and some of what he owd to his hands, his leesed land that was bit by bit clamed by the farming men. So there wasnt nothing left of Sams life, his enterprizes, except for the house and corrals and the bunkhouse, they sat there emty un til the wind blew them into gray dry bones that was picked over for fule by the farmers, because there wasnt much trees for wood down there and it made a nice change from bufalo chips that was gatherd in the fal. thats what becum of Sams realass state.

So anyhow youv seen the way Sam was when he was a life, so that part of the story shoudnt realy be a grate sirprize for no one, Sams geting basht over the hed like he was. it wasnt like I wanted it that way tho, thats just the way it cum out.

So heres how it was.

It was one of those hot dry days in August, it was the kind of hot where yor throte and nose gets al scrachy just from brething in the dry dust that was flying about in the air, and the chaffy grain from be neath the threshers

flail. It seemd like the chaff it was floting evry where to. Like youd find bits of it in yr hair, it woud cling to yr closthe in a fine dust, it woud get in under neath some times and youd near go crazy with iching. Iph she was just walking by her self, Maryd askd her to go get a pail of chokecheries for making jelly, so she was lugging along one of those 5 galon metal buckets it was ful of chokecheries not full to the top but it was stil real hevvy, it was banging on her legs and she was thinking, she shoudnt have pickd so much, her legs woud be al ful of bruses, you no how that is when your carying a buket thats to hevvy for you and it hits you rite on the shins evry time you take a step. and she was sposed to be geting bak to the hous and helping Mary get the dinner on for the threshing crew, but she desided any ways to go down to the damn for just a few momens be for she went home, may be shed be abel to cool her self off in the water there. and rest her arms and bak, they was sure aking and she was wishing she hadnt pickd so many, And so there she ran, and sat down on the sunny bank by the water, and she took off her shoes and her socks al gray with the dust. She stood up and lookd about her, there was no body around and so she just lifted up her skirts, aways up highr then her nees, well that was stil considerd a littel riskay bak then, and she stept in to the ege of the water. and stept out again and let her skirts fal bak over her legs, becaus there coming over the hil was old Sam Coldrige.

Sam he was looking at her and he was smiling tho it looked like his face was in a snarl with his teeth showing yellow and black. and white was in the corners of his mouth like he was dry and thirsty.

This is what I like to see, he said, this I like to see. You the water sprite of this here wel? He was smoking a

the hystery of the broken fether

cigarette its fumes smoked out in thin gray trails from his nose. he took one last puff and then threw it down and stomped it into the dirt with his big brown boot. and over he menandered with a mosying motion and his flashing eyes was squinting in the sun. Iph she was taut to be polite and so she didnt do nothing nor go a way all tho she was a little bit fritened and be sides she didnt no much about mens natures and be for she new it she was shoved hard into the dirt flat on her back and hot breth reeking in her face, his hands they was blueveined and dry and scaly, the pads of the fingers were puffy white and the yelow finger nails curving down over and black dirt under the rinds, he was like a demon or some thing. and she was saying Stop but it was like for him he didnt no what that word ment.

and then his arm was a cross her throat and she was choking and she coudnt brethe and when she tried to get a way he punchd her in the stomach and he was looking and all she coud think was, there my old ones, there so tatterd and grey with washing, whatll he think, my old grey bloomers. and al that, it takes longer to tel it, almost, than it took for it to hapen, it was that fast.

When it was over, he stood bak he didnt look at her no mor. She got up agin and straitend her skirt and she piked up her pail and started to walk a way. she didnt no what al else she could do she wanted so badly to have som dignaty about her. but She was starting to cry, and then she turnt and sayd my Dad you no hes going kil you now. He will, she sayd.

Well then he lookt at her he sayd Aint no way, your a tart thats all. hell think your a tart. he was saying that but he was coming at her and he had a evil look in his eys. just befor he got to her tho, he slipt a little in the mud and gras, his one hand on the ground and his eyes

looking strait at her and his feet they were pushing against the mud to run at her and he was just starting to rite his self, he was lunging at her She didnt think twice she just up and turnt her body with her arms al stif and swung that pail at him, heavy as it was full of the berries and it swung in this fine ark grace ful like she was dantsing she caut him with the sharp metal edge on the botom of it, she caut him rite acrost the temple and her pail just caried on its ark, it caried her body so she turned in a circel almost, so fast she felt like she was flying. and he fel like a brick.

she stood there breathing hard, looking at this little line of chokecherries scatterd on the stomped down muddy gras, they was al that had come out from the pail thats how hard shed swung it, they al just stayd in the botom and she marveld at that and then she relized she was stil holding the pail she hadnt even droped it she was just standing there like shed just stroled over the hil herself just this minut.

now Sam he wasnt ded he was bleeding tho and he was slumpt down on to the ground and Iph gatherd her self together and she run a ways a way as fast as she coud, she didnt want to spil no mor berryes. and she saw Sam get his self up off of the ground and she wached him stumble and reel like he was drunk or some thing

and thats where she left him

Wel she thot he just woud of stumbeld bak to his ranch, she thot hed just be having one hek of a head ake the nex day. she kind of was glad about that, that hed be sufring for it, tho it wasnt realy al that funy. but she never told no one. not a sole. Becaus she didnt quite ritely no what hapent. I mean, she new, shed grown up on a farm shed seen what goes on shed seen horses put together in

the hystery of the broken fether

a pen, they what had been quiet and cawm, chewing on hay, and then screeming the stalyons nostrils flared wide and he in a frenzy and racing a round and a round and a round in that pen and trying to close up to the mare, she with her ears layd way bak her teeth showing and evry time hed com close she kickt him him in the chest and she screemed and he bleeding with dark blak blod runing down his front legs and hed rear up to, his sharp hoofs they was coming down on her to. but it got don. And Iph shed seen that so it wasnt that she didnt understand a bout.

It was mor to do with her self, not so much even about Sam, because she sort of under stood thats how some men are, thers not much you coud do about it exsept stay out of there ways. but she thot if she told Mary what hapend, thats the only one she mite be able to tel shed never tel Abe, how coud she de scribe that for her father, she woudnt no what words to use she woudnt even no if she coud make him understand her, so even if she told it to Mary wel Mary woud of corse tel it to Abe, and Iph new that teling that story to any one woud be a shameful exprience and not only that but may be they woud tel her the blame was hers, once it was out in the open like that and evryone new, theyd be saying wel Iph she askt for it, she shoud of nown beter than to be wondering a round a lone, a desent young women woud no beter than that, and not only that, she liftit up her skirts and showd her legs to. she must of had a look about her, she shoud of nown beter she shoud of been mor wary. so Iph she just like pertended to her self that it didnt hapen at al.

So the nex day, Mary she sayd

Allison Muri

Iph go take your sisters to the damn to get them out of my hair I got to much stuf to do here to hav them dantsing about under neath my feet.

Wel how about we go looking for choke cherries in stead sayd Iph, may be over the hil in the coolee over there, she was pointing a way from the damn. But no Mary sayd, we got enouf from al the picking you already done and you no them girls been asking you to take them for a wade in the water for days and besides, its to hot to be out in the sun on the dry hil. you go down to the damn wher its cool and wet, you let the girls hav a littel bit of fun

and so off they went over the hils to the water, they al took off there shoes and socks and was just started in to wading a round when Iph she sudenly notised the big dark shape it was just at the waters eye over about twenty feet from them, there was long gray hair floting about amongst the weeds. wel Iph she just up and out of that water so fast, she calt Rachel and Elizabeth, she sayd were goin home NOW. and she draged those girls a way from that place, they was screeming al the way home because they wanted to splash in the water for a wile.

Wel of corse Mary wasnt to pleesd to see them girls com truging in to the house again befor shed even got started on scrubing the flor, so she started in to teling Iph off, but she must of notised Iph was feling strange be caus she stopt short and she sayd

your looking white, girl, you best go lie down, you best put a vineger rag on yr forhed. you must of got to much sun.

I had to stop there for a while I had some compny banging on my dor

the hystery of the broken fether

Wel here I am back again. That littel white space on the paper it dont look like much does it. But there was an awful lot of time in there. I aint been able to look at this here story of mine, that nok on the door it was Mrs. Svend from down the hall, shed herd the news from the night nurse, Dots past away. Wel the next day one of those nurses from the hospitle callt me to, they new I was visiting her regilairly but they had to noteify her children first. So in between those 2 lines up there, I was greiving, seems like its been a long long time. I went to her funerl, the tea was just downstairs here in the meeting room. She woud of liked it, the tea served up in silver pots and the cofee in silver pots too, served by young ladies in white aprons. Dots kids, they wanted nothing but the best for her, The sandwiches was cut in stripes with the crusts cut off too. And there wasnt one of them big serve yourself cofee urns in site. Dot woud of sayd that was real classy

Barbara come all the way up from Swift Current, she caut the bus just to be here for it, that was just the kind of thing shed do. And Jack himself in the hospital too, so she couldnt stay, prety soon after the tea she had to leave again. When she come into the church for the funreal, she sat down beside me, she caried the smel of the snow on her coat. It was a good crisp smel that reminded me of how alife you feel when your breathing your breath out in wite ghosts above the wite snow. It wakes you up, reminds you how sharp your life is in you, its some how like a crystal forms in your mind, its a clear shape of being alife. I was thinking on that, I haven't felt that way much lately, I ben breathing in the stale furnace air at the Home.

Barbara, she leant forword, Mom? she sayd. and she layd her hand over top of mine. her hand, what used to

Allison Muri

be so soft and smooth. Jack, he used to hold it to his lips like she was a queen or some thing, she layd that hand like a nobby old Iris root over top of my own. Our two old liver spotted hands, both ful of authoritis, hardly good for nothing no more. Mom, I'm here she sayd, and that was all. That was enuf.

Then when we went out side agin after the service, there was just that littel breeze, the snow it was sparkling in the sun lighte, that breez made me re member the wind on the farm, o how we hated the wind it was al ways there it was alwys blowing it seemt, blowin dust stingin our eys. but in the winter time, that wind if it wasnt too cold it just brot life in to you, you coud feel it, the life coming in to you with the cool snowy wind. It had that smel to it after Dots funreal, it had that smel of crisp fresh life, I felt I coud run agin when I sept out of that chruch. but Barb she sayd Careful Mom, its slipry, she took my arm and we leant on each other over to the car and we slipt and slided a littel but we did al right

I was glad to see Dot once more with her teeth in. I spose they must bury you with your teeth, at least I hope her mouth isnt stuffed with cotten or some thing. She lookt real nice, she had on her wig and she had on her dress with the purple flowers, she wanted to have something nice and bright like that. I was glad to say good by to her like that.

You see, thats the thing isnt it. I no of corse I wasnt saying good by to Dorothy, I was only making my self feel beter about it, she woudnt care if I sayd good by to her dead corps, she wasnt in there no more. But it seems like peple, we always got to tie things up like that, draw things to gether, make a neat finish or what ever. Like sewing a seem on things.

Wel there you have it then. You no the rest of it

the hystery of the broken fether

So now Im in trouble again, Im not realy sure how to draw al the meanings together, I dont realy no how to make al those conections come together to make the happy ending. nobody that I no is geting maried, and its not even spring time. Oh well. Iv told my story, what I ment to tel, the histry of Sams ranch is in here some wheres, and I told about the mystory of his death. Which wasnt so mystrious after al. It was just one of them things that hapens some times