

T H E N E V E R - E N D I N G N E W S

975 E. Main Canyon Rd. - Wallsburg, UT 84082 - October 9, 1993

A thought converted to verse. Inspired by a steep climb up Upheaval Dome Trail, Canyonlands, Utah, Oct. 6, 1993.

To my Heart on an Upward Trail

Old heart, for ten years and three score
Your beat has kept alive our eyes,
To rapt behold, in awe descry,
God's works sublime, to leap and soar.

Old heart,

Pump o'er and o'er as heretofore,
Till your last beat as life's light dies
Drapes black two mirrors: dying eyes;
Then swell with joy as oft before,

Then burst once more,
Oh...! Glory! Glories nigh!
Burst, as you adore.

Mature individuals know that in olden times there was a custom, in death, to cover mirrors with black drapes--as when my Grandma Hall died, I think.

Stream of consciousness, Silver Sage Motel, Moab Utah, Oct. 5. In the mirror this morning I saw wet black hair mottled with a few specks of gray. "Mmm mmm, mmm mmm mmm mmm mmm," I hummed and then intoned:

I looked over Jordan, and what did I see,
Comin' fo' to carry me home?
A band of angels, comin' after me,
Comin' fo' to carry me home.

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' fo' to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Comin' fo' to carry me home.

I looked Jordan over and what did I see? The cutest little guy eyes ever did see. I looked over Jordan and what did I see? Marvin, Anna, Brandon, Julia and Devin. Hair touseled, covering my upper forehead, I looked in the mirror again and what did I see? Devin! Honest. I haven't had time to get my hair cut of late and it's the longest in my life. I realize that I was purely flattering myself, but the thought triggered a giant smile and for a fleeting second Devin accomodatingly looked back at me. That precious, sweet little darling! (Entre parentesis, Merrill has always said I look like Devin--my polite, humble way of putting it.) I looked in the mirror once more and guess what? I made a profound discovery. Our spirits do not look like our bodies. The self within me is young, vital, vigorous and good-looking. I've just remembered Anna said she finally cut Devin's hair. It was too long for BYU grooming standards. O.K. Off goes mine.

Upheaval Dome Trail. We've already visited Arches and Dead Horse Point. Any description I might attempt would faint and die of embarrassment before the reality which most of you have seen. For these surroundings there is but one word, the one so routinely debased by juveniles but embued with its onetime meaning: Awesome! To express fear, reverence and wonder in the presence of the sublime, sacred, majestic, overpowering. This trail has signs like others hereabout that give the distance and altitude loss to scenic overlooks. One glance at these steep climbs reveals that "loss" in

burocratese means "gain." In this instance, in terms of the 1300 ft. climb and how my struggling heart was uplifted, thrilled and enthralled by the splendors at the top and along the way, there was no loss. The greater the pain the greater the gain. I refer only to chest pains. As you know, my poor heart muscles suffer from clogged arteries and have deteriorated. My other muscles are O.K. Yes, also the ones menacing my skull with an edema.

We are just back from our climb and I am at a picnic table, writing this and resting in the shade of a scrubby, scrappy pine tree--have to be, to take root in these desert rocks and survive such a scarcity of moisture and extremes of weather. Genus: pocasombra. Species: valiente. Merrill gets way ahead of me on these climbs, causing me to query myself, "How is she ever going to catch up with me if she's always out in front?" Oops! I've overlooked yawning chasms. For a better look I go right up to the very edge. Merrill forbears.

Lucky for me, the Park Service had considerably situated rocks everywhere for me to sit on or lean against to rest a little or a lot. There is one near here--not on the trail--that's as big as a whale and so named. That's what I needed at the top. Almost at the bottom of the trail (Loss? Gain? Anyway, going down), I stepped aside for a band of husky hikers. One of them clucked his tongue. It's against the rules to leave trails and accidentally crush microorganisms and such. I couldn't resist a small pleasantry and/or witticism that bubbled up in me and retorted: "Ja, ja, ich weiss schon. Es ist verboten. Strengst untergesagt!" Before we left last Monday, I thought of a bumper sticker for our car: "German Tourists - NOT!"

Circle Inn, Blanding, Oct. 6. Too tired to write. Merrill and I are sitting here in the motel eating greasy chicken, same as Fidel Castro at the Waldorf-Astoria when he did some Yankee-baiting at the United Nations way back when you and I were young. He brought his own live fowls from Cuba to be plucked and cooked for him by his comrades, such was his fear of death by poisoning. I don't want to impugn a small business (the first syllable of the name of the eatery where we got the grease rhymes with the first of McVea and the last rhymes with the way people not in the know pronounce the last; i.e., "McBee"), but this chicken they sold us is what is reminding me of Fidel. "Grease power!" My banned former slogan nixed axle grease mixes.

Virgin River Resort, Mesquite, Nevada, Oct. 7. It is the attractive room rates that have brought us here--and nothing else. We loved Capitol Reefs! First time we'd been there. Same with Arches, Dead Horse Point and Canyonlands. (Bryce and Zion's were rain and fog shrouded.) Merrill said along the way that after we got married it used to really hurt her when her mom and dad would take off on trips to Illinois and elsewhere and leave her behind! Their own darling daughter! Funny, we feel the same when you go off without us. Near the gorge in Capitol Reefs, we came across a group of German tourists and it was great to talk German briefly. I assured them that not all of us are verrückt und gefährlich (crazy and dangerous). They laughed when to disabuse them of such a supposition and ease their apprehension I rolled my eyes and slacked my jaw. No laughing matter, however, how German tourists have been mindlessly murdered by fiends in Miami.

Great Basin National Park, retrospectively from Oct. 9. Well worth visiting. Merrill loved it. Mt. Nebo, Nebo Loop, Timp and Alpine Loop are more beautiful and impressive, though. It's a whole lot less crowded there than here, however, which is very nice. Can't compare their Lehman Cave with our Timpanogas. Didn't have time to take it in. All our love,

Merrill
Wendell

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