

ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON

BY DEBBY SMITH

To me, there are a lot of important things in the world and things that I notice that most people never even thought about. I feel sorry for those that never find the things that just come to me.

When I was a little girl, I can remember riding the horses eleven miles to go see Grandma. She was always really happy to see me, and after she got done pinching my cheeks and telling me how big I was getting, she'd send me outside to leave the grown-ups to their talk. That didn't bother me though.

I can remember standing on a chair in the old tree house, so I could see the top of the hill. The trees became Indians on their painted ponies and the fence posts, the Indian's spears. There was a young brave that would smile and wink at me when the chief wasn't looking and then go back to his solemn, sad face. For a moment I would gleam with a happy feeling inside, then Auntie Lou would break the spell with her call, "Dinner!" I would shut my eyes as to hold in one moment more and then run to the spring to wash up. You see, there were no faucets in the house, but the way I remember it with everything so clean - it wasn't even the natural color.

There was always a big dinner, and I was told to stop picking at my food like a bird. After dinner the men would talk and fall off into a nap while the ladies cleaned up the dishes. But Great Grandpa and I would sneak off and go the old shed where the retired wooden butter churn was stored and get out the old swing and take it to the tree in front of the house. I can see Grandpa now - climb that big old cottonwood tree to tie the ropes on that limb and me lookin' up to watch him, so steady for his age. Then he'd come down and set me in the swing and push me and tell me of his childhood, while my blonde curls flew in the breeze like a story book picture.

It was like he was back in Kansas again playing in the cornfields with his brother, then he'd wipe a tear from his eye and smile for me when I looked at him questionably. Then, we'd build a teeter-totter with a plank board and an old diesel can and play till Grandma would come to the door and scream at Gramps to do the chores.

First we'd milk the cow and scratch the calf's ears. Then we'd gather the eggs and feed and water the chickens. The horses could take care of themselves, but Grandpa would let me sneak the expensive rolled oats to them anyway.

Then it would be time to go inside and have a quick supper and head for home. By then, I was getting tired, and I was asleep in the saddle about the second mile. Sure, we could have taken the car those eleven miles, but it would never have left the sweet memories that I have now. Like the time my horse ate the lilacs off of Grandma's favorite bush, and I got spanked for it.

Today Great Grandpa and Grandma are dead, but that's not what matters, I remember them both as Great people and people I loved and still love, people that gave me my childhood.