

MARION HARDER
The Old Farmhouse

I went back to visit
The old farmhouse ten years ago
There it was - still standing forlorn and forsaken
I still visualize it

I went back to visit the faded, yellow, wooden structure where I spent hour and hour hanging my feet from the hole in the ceiling where there was no furnace down into the living room below

I went back to visit the gigantic, brown, stairs we use to run up and down on
To our bedroom on the second story of the old farmhouse
Then I ran to see the wood burning stove in the kitchen that kept our feet warm on many a cold morn

I went back to visit the scary, dirt basement with rickety, old steps which contained our glass, jar preserves and our potatoes and the salamanders that my brother use to put down my shirt and scare me

I went back to visit the valley where I would run from the kitchen screen door to the old, red, barn with the white trimmed roof and lighting rod on top or run out to the old cream colored out house

I went back to visit the separator room where my mother poured cream richly from one spout and frothy war milk squirting magically from the other and we drank our fill

I went back to visit the well with the statue of the horses on them where we would run and get two plastic red pails of cold, rusty, iron tasting drinking water and swing them over our heads two at a time one bucket one way the other the opposite direction- never spilling a drop

I went back to visit our old farmyard, the house, the barn, the chicken coop and sheds, the outhouse, the tire swing, and lilac bushes and garden and caragannas and water well and it was gone-all of it-gone.

No hills, no trees, no bushes, no buildings, no nothing- except flattened stumble prairie- all of it gone- to dust.

All of my existence and my family's life were gone- vanished without a trace of anything left
It was gone we were all gone- disappeared and because of that desolate image part of my being my life was gone with it

I was saddened by all of it and the memories it contained and the realization that soon-very soon- Those memories would be gone too.

Marion Harder, a teacher for the past twenty-six years in Saskatoon, aspires to publish a poetry book in her retirement (in four years). With a mad passion for the arts, Marion loves to write, folkdance, sing, play guitar, flower garden and read. Her teaching and her life experiences help develop unique stories and songs. Her latest production released September 2005 ? was a DVD entitled "Goats' Milk, Sauerkraut and Prayer" where she interviewed 14 centenarians and documented "The Three Century Club" a group of 179 Saskatchewan survivors who lived during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.