

His Windwalkers

An October night –
Clear, cool, crisp and dry,
Stars sifted densely
Across the dark sky,
Blanket of silence
Softly on the land,
Windwalkers gathering,
A spiritual band.

To a wooden bench,
Carefully chosen place
Comes a lone soul
Seeking spiritual grace.

The old man sheds
His sense of self,
Seeking a oneness,
A spiritual wealth.

**Meadow pasture
By starlight dimly lit,
Fades into the shadows
Surrounding it.
The old man gazes
Upon the scene,
Sips wine from a cup
And begins to dream.**

**Considering numbers,
Tomorrows and yesterdays,
A deceasing ratio
As his time passes away.
Successes and failures,
Laughter and tears,
Pains and pleasures
Have branded his years.**

**Tonight remembering
Neither good deed nor sin,
Nor pondering the people
And the places he's been.**

His spirit freed from

**Restricting time and space
With *windwalkers* communing
By God's grace.**

**Silently moving,
No need for a sound,
These angels now
Gather all around.
Each so young,
So healthy and fit,
In shaping his life,
Each had done their bit.**

**His dad and Tony,
John and Jim,
Grandma, Dorothy, Nellie,
Each so special to him.
When each had passed,
He'd grieved his own way.
But actually their spirits
Were only a dream away.**

**His dad and Tony,
Not similar at all,
But always together
To answer his call.
He sought a look
For approval rare.
They never spoke, only smiled
And made his heart sing.**

**They were proud of how
He'd nurtured poor soils;
And the barn he'd built
With wages from other toils.
But when he'd sinned
And God's laws he'd broken,
He saw their backs turned;
Nothing need be spoken.**

**On several occasions,
Shown by evidence,
They'd been there;
Nothing else made sense.
Once while being dragged**

**By a runaway horse,
He was pulled from the stirrup;
Fulfilling God's choice.**

**And then his friends
John and Jim.
The best of his life,
Ever thankful for them.
Truly men among men,
Each in his own way,
Honored and respected
By many to this day.**

**None believed it so
But He and John would
Jointly conserve a bird
While harvesting wood.
Many days were hard,
Respect brought them through.
Friendship forged in fire;
Bonds of steel that was blue.**

**Oh, Jim, that smile
And chuckle so free,
Your blessing came
Back in '63.**

**You taught him a lot;
He taught you some.**

**It was a friendship forever;
A uniquely special one.**

**Grandma's heels clacking
On the old cabin floor,
Her chuckles the only cheer
In drab rooms of four.
A mountain woman's life,
She'd made the best of it.**

**Kerosene lamp, spring water,
Ten children – one an invalid.**

**Drawn back to his roots,
In the Blue Ridge he'd ride,
Good trail horses,
His brother by his side.
Then that day when hurt**

**In a horse wreck up high,
Grandma pleaded: “Come back
To your camp. I’m waiting nearby.”**

**Dorothy, a friend when
He thought there was none,
Grandmother to his children,
And loved by everyone.**

**Her life so hard,
Pain often her reward,
But committed to helping others
And believing in the Lord.**

**Nellie, aunt, caretaker to him
And his siblings she’d be.
He remembers sometimes
Being taken across her knee.
Crippled in her teens;
Rheumatoid arthritis they would say,
But no affliction ever dampened
The love she gave every day.**

With each passing year
Her body was more bent,
But ever wonderful love
Her loving heart sent.
God's angel, blessed is she.
Having suffered for others
Like Christ upon the tree.

Of dogs and horses,
There were quite a few.
But the loves of his life,
There could be only two.
Tater and Snoopy, dog and horse,
Deep love and adventures
Shared 'cross time's course.

Tater ambles to
The old man's side.
The old man strokes
Beaming with pride.
"Looking good, boy. Remember when
We roamed fields and woods
Searching for scent on the wind."

Woodcock and grouse
Were special to us.
But quail and pheasant
We'd take without fuss.
And then that field trial,
You won without quit,
"One great dog per life;
For you, Tater's it"

In the old man's arms,
Tater's spirit passed away.
A body spent and painful
Was given mercy that painful day.

The man had cried
Like a child for its dead mother.
That place in his heart
Could never have another.

Snoopy walks over,
Head down, velvet nose out long.

The old man marveled
A body so perfect, so strong.

And those big eyes

**So soft, so kind
Filled with love
Shared for a long time.
The old man reached,
Stroked that beautiful face
The horse love of his life
His by Divine grace.**

**Snoopy had come
When he was needed most.
A painful divorce,
Not the man's choice.
Snoopy brought a challenge,
A new dimension to his life.
Growing love and friendship,
Escape from heartbreak and strife.**

**This horse was his teacher,
Companion and friend.
Took him back to a childhood
Cowboy he'd been.
But from the racetrack
This fine horse had come.**

**So about trails on wild lands,
He had to learn some.**

**Frightened by pine cones,
Black stumps, big or small,
Swaying, creaking trees
He was afraid of them all.
But they learned to face
Every challenge together,
Until they were one,
In the song of the leather.**

**Over hundreds of miles
Light of sun or moon,
Their many adventures
Turned history way too soon.
From long sand roads
In the lower coastal plain
To the trails in the hills, across rivers
They rode them again.**

**Then that day when
A tumor ruptured inside,
Plunging Snoopy towards death;
“Oh God, Snoopy, not now!”
The parting was as hard
As any had ever been.
Now he prays for a time
When they’ll ride on the wind.**

**The old man slowly
From his spiritual time waking,
Looks overhead to the path
Orion is taking.
Feeling warmed by their love
In the cool, night air,
This less saint than sinner,
Knows God has been fair.**

Gene W. Wood

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