



CALLAHAN COUNTY STAR SPOTLIGHT

WRITERS, TEACHER & STUDENT SHOWCASE

(All submitters retain ownership)

PREMIER EDITION

Submissions sought to:

Star

P.O. Box 29

Eastland, TX 76448

email: thebairdstar@yahoo.com

com

S.A.S.E. for returns

--WANTED--

20 lines,

double spaced or less

Poetry

Fiction or Non

MEDITATIONS

Above the clouds there is an azure sky, a reminder that out beyond the blue are stars that shine in the dark of night;

Beacons that challenge man to reach for the stars, daring him to dream and strive for what some might say is the impossible quest.

Only if man accepts the challenge and keeps alive the dream, only then as he touches that special star will he be victorious.

DARK is the night. Yet inside the cottage by the sea a fire burns, its warmth and the flickering fame is comforting. A candle on the mantle creates shadows that dance across the room.

We hear the sea as it crashes on the rocks of the shore. Tomorrow will reveal some sea shells from the deep, the waves leaving them behind for our treasure chest.

Here there is a moment in time when all is well in our world. Tonight we sit by the fire, savoring the solitude in our cottage by the sea.

WHEN the joy of yesterday has vanished with the dark clouds of sorrow today, look closely.

The rain which falls will tomorrow cause the roses to shine with yesterday's droplets of water. They will sparkle in the sun's rays as diamonds, as jewels of great value.

Rejoice. Our sorrows will turn to hope and joy once again.

Johnnie Elma Anderson
Midland, Texas

Last Date

When Arnold was in high school, he fell in love with Cynthia. He longed to ask her for a date, but there were several problems with this idea. Cynthia was the most popular girl in school. She was president of the student council, top dog of the student union, a member of the National Honor Society, senior favorite, most likely to succeed - you name it, she was part of it. Arnold, on the other hand, was a real nobody in high school - most likely to recede. Only ten people knew his name, and these were all the guys like him. Arnold couldn't get voted into any kind of office if he were the only person on the ballot. Besides, he had no money, no car, no charm, no magic words to say to someone like Cynthia. All he could do was dream. Then one day Providence stepped in.

After Arnold graduated from high school, he went to a small college in the northern part of the state. Cynthia ended up there also, and most importantly, all those silly honors from former days were just a memory for her. She was actually now on the same level as Arnold. At least that was his line of reasoning. Now was his chance to ask her out. However, several obstacles had to be overcome.

It took Arnold a few weeks to work up the nerve to ask Cynthia for a date. He should see her on campus, decide to make his big move, and then lose his nerve at the last minute; he could only manage a polite "hello" to her. Ordinarily, Cynthia would not have suspected something was up. She was accustomed to being worshipped by important boys from high school, and Arnold's pitiful attempts at courtship would have gone unnoticed. But Cynthia was a long way from home and no longer the prima donna she once was. In short, she was bored and lonely. The college guys didn't know about her high school accomplishments, and they must have thought she wasn't so special. Nobody had asked her out the whole time she had been in college. So Cynthia began to be civil to Arnold. His time was ripe.

He was almost ready to ask her. But another potential problem arose in case she consented. He never actually thought of an affirmative was possible, but on the chance it did occur, he had to have a car. His roommate, Ed, had one, if you could call it that. The vehicle did run, but it looked bad and smelled even worse on the inside. But, it was Arnold's only opportunity. He would have to make do. The biggest basketball game of the season was coming up and it provided the perfect excuse for Arnold to ask Cynthia out. Although he figured all this planning was an exercise in futility anyway, he nevertheless moved forward.

He called Cynthia at the girls' dorm on Monday before the game, fully expecting to be rejected. To his surprise, though, she readily accepted his invitation. He told her that he would pick her up at 7:00 in the evening on Saturday. He spent most of Saturday cleaning Ed's car, polishing it and trying to fumigate it. The old rattletrap looked pretty good by the time he finished. Then, he carefully groomed

SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR

One hot spring afternoon, my grandson had just fallen asleep for his nap and I hear a banging at the east kitchen door. As I opened the door, my heart began to pound with fright. A man without a shirt and wearing a gun around his waist was snatching there bent from his waist. He was screaming, "Get me some help." I opened the kitchen door for him and he came inside. I started trying to find out what had happened to him and he looked at me with one eye closed. He finally calmed down enough to tell me he was my neighbor on the west side and he was also a policeman. He wanted me to get his wife to come home immediately. I tried to reach her at her office but failed. He had been called to assist another officer with a job and he hurriedly started to the location, locking the door behind him. He got into his car and remembered the water hose was running in the yard. He went to turn the water off. He stooped down to turn the hydrant off and a bee stung him in the eye. His pain was intense. I picked up the sleeping child and had the man get into my car and away we sped to the emergency room at the local hospital. The doctor said the bee's stinger was in the man's eyeball and it would take surgery to remove it. The nurses finally succeeded in reaching his wife and she arrived shortly. He had surgery and returned home in a couple of days with very little damage except for the damage to my nerves and the pain he endured and the officer being left without backup.

Wanda Lee Beck Skinner
Eastland, Texas

.....
himself. Arnold didn't have much to work with. Still, a high school prize would soon be his: the first triumph of his miserable life.

The basketball game was sure to draw a maximum crowd. Arnold thought he had allowed plenty of time to pick Cynthia up and get to the coliseum in time to find a good seat. What Arnold had not allowed time for was Cynthia. He arrived at the dorm exactly on time, but Cynthia was not quite ready. In fact, she was terrible late coming down. He hurried her to the car. She wrinkled her nose when she got in but didn't say anything about a smell. Arnold rushed to the game only to find out that just about every seat in the place was occupied. The few ones available were located close to the ceiling. The stairs leading up to these were elevated at about an 80-degree angle, narrow with no railings on the sides. Arnold and Cynthia started up. She had not said much to him so far, probably because he was rushing her ahead of him. When they were almost to the top of the stairs the crowd let out a roar. Somebody must have made a tremendous play down on the court. While continuing to climb the stairs behind Cynthia, Arnold turned around to see what happened. Then the unthinkable occurred. Just to trip and fall down would have been embarrassing enough, but Arnold, because of the slant of the stairs, started to roll. In fact, he picked up considerable speed as he rolled. The crowd around this area quit watching the game and started watching Arnold. No one thought to stop him. This was better entertainment than the half-time show. After about thirty feet, Arnold came to a rest. If he had only been thinking straight he would have just stayed there, pretending he was unconscious so that the medics could carry him out on a stretcher. But Arnold wasn't thinking straight. He was too shook up. Instead, he wearily rose to his feet and looked up. Cynthia was standing there, thirty feet up, looking down at him, so red in the face that she looked like a human thermometer. The crowd cheered Arnold, only adding to both his and Cynthia's humiliation. Obviously, things had not gotten off to a good start. Arnold slowly trudged up the stairs, found two seats together and sat down with Cynthia. What could he say to her? Probably nothing that would make up for his blunder. Cynthia did not seem inclined to talk anyway. In truth, she was very quiet throughout the rest of the game and wouldn't even look at him. Arnold tried to think of a way he could make up for being a klutz.

By the time the game was over, Arnold had come up with the bright idea of going to the late movie downtown. The Dixie Theater was showing a good romantic picture. Maybe Cynthia would warm up to him some. She agreed it was a good idea. So they took off. When Arnold pulled into the Dixie parking lot almost all the spaces were taken. The lot was just gravel, and it had rained while the ball game was going on. The many chuck holes were full of water. This escaped Arnold's immediate attention because he was concentrating so hard on finding a spot. He finally found one and pulled in. If Cynthia had only waited until he had come around to open the door for her, Arnold would have noticed that the car was parked over a big hole full of mud and water. Probably in her excitement to get into a place where she wouldn't have to talk to Arnold, Cynthia opened her own door and stepped right into the mud. What she was thinking at the moment was written all over her face. Arnold felt pretty bad about the whole thing but convinced her that since they were already parked they might as well go see

Each entry with brief biographical notes. All must be family oriented; no smut, slander or liable material.

.....
the movie.

When they got into the Dixie, Cynthia wanted to go to the ladies room to wipe the mud off her feet. Arnold waited patiently in the lobby. He could hear the movie already beginning and started to panic. Would they find a suitable place to sit or was this going to be a repeat of the basketball game? Sure enough, by the time Cynthia came out, the only seats remaining were in the upper balcony in the middle back. They had to wade over, step on in Arnold's case, many toes to get to them. But they both settled back to enjoy the show.

After the movie was over, Cynthia said she had to go back to the restroom. This was too bad, because all the cars were gone from the parking lot by the time Arnold and Cynthia came out. Otherwise, Arnold could have gotten help from somebody when he discovered his keys still in the ignition and all doors locked. Cynthia wasn't real impressed. She was probably willing to walk or hitch a ride back to the campus at this point. But like a real trooper, she stuck by Arnold as though she was determined to see this date through, no matter what. He walked to a fire station about three blocks away and came back with a fireman who used a coat hanger to get the car door open. Cynthia stood by and watched the operation with a smirk on her face.

Arnold knew by this time that the date was a disaster. There was no use asking Cynthia if she wanted to get something to eat. From the look on her face she would have thrown it up anyway. So he drove back to the dorm, hoping to find something witty to say that would rescue him from Cynthia's certain derision. Nothing came to mind. He walked her to the door and told her that he had enjoyed the evening. She looked at him as if he was joking, turned and walked away without saying a word. Arnold shuffled back to his car dejected.

If anyone ever needed a drink it was Arnold. But he lived in a dry county and nothing was available. So he decided to stop at an all-night donut place and get a cup of coffee before he went back to his room. The joint's parking lot rose on an incline up from a grocery store next door. Arnold pulled in and killed the engine, went inside and ordered coffee and three donuts in order to ease his pain. As he was sipping his drink, he just happened to look out the window, only to see the car rolling down the hill toward the wall of the grocery store. Arnold then remembered that he had not taken the car out of gear. He jumped up and ran outside and managed to get inside and stop the vehicle right before it crashed into the wall. That did it: a fitting end to a pathetic evening. Nobody would ever believe the bad luck he had experienced on his first date.

Make that his last date. The possibility of ever asking Cynthia out again did not exist. He would see her on campus and she would take another path or drop her head and not speak to him. Arnold really couldn't blame her. His reputation was ruined even before it had been established. What a bumbling idiot he was! But, he did make up his mind about something: concentrate on school and forget about women. This worked. For the next four years he was successful academically. Cynthia flunked out of college.

- Billy B. Smith
Ranger, Texas

The Making of a Great Person

Many things that are broken seem to be irreparable.

Don't spend your time regretting that

But instead make the best of things that do work.

Maybe you don't have all the correct tools for

A particular job but look for new uses for the

Tools you do have that will do the same job a little differently.

Maybe you, like so many of us today,

Do not like the heat wave we are having

But I would like to make a quick suggestion.

Use the hottest time of the day doing the things you enjoy Such as swimming, movies, working on computers or visiting the library. Make the most of every opportunity that comes your way.

Find ways to turn the disadvantages into things

That causes you to use your inner ability.

Face disadvantages with the attitude that

Here is a chance for me to better myself and the life of others.

Great men are usually made by overcoming failure.

And rising above the obstacles in life one step at a time.

Look for a certain victory.

Wanda Lee Beck Skinner