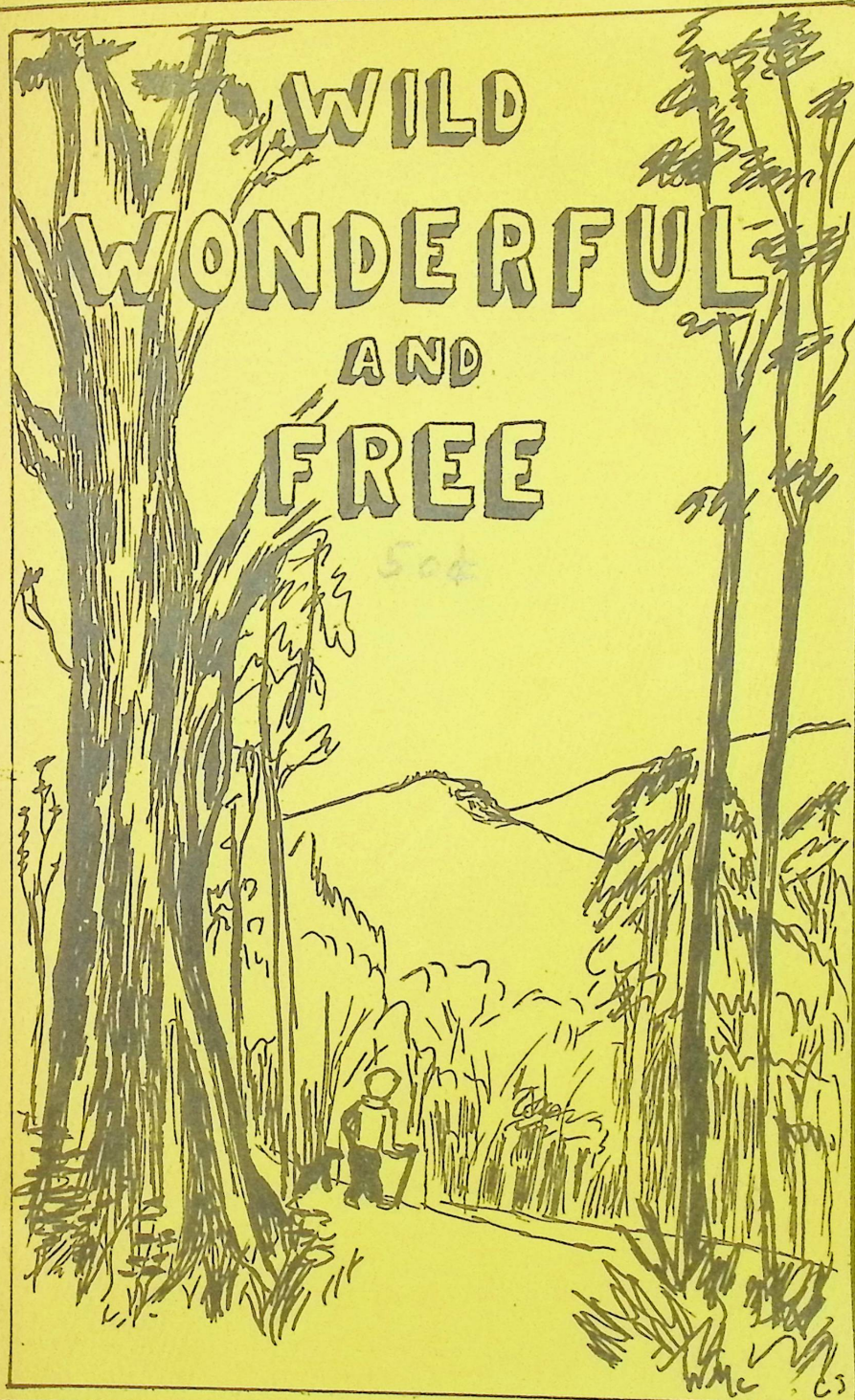


**WILD
WONDERFUL
AND
FREE**



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WONDERFUL
AND
FREE**

POEMS BY JACKSON COUNTIANS

Sponsored by

LEE MAYS CHAPTER

WEST VIRGINIA POETRY SOCIETY

1976

This booklet is sponsored by the Lee Mays Chapter of the West Virginia Poetry Society, which is a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. Membership in this Chapter is open to all persons in the area who are interested in writing poetry or in enjoying poetry. The president of the Chapter is Harold Slate of Sissonville.

The booklet includes the prize winning poems of a contest sponsored by the Chapter on the theme of "National Pride Through History", open to residents of Jackson County. Prizes were awarded to children and to adults.

The art work was created by Willa McGinley and Cheryl Stump, both of Ripley, West Virginia.

This is the third booklet published by the Chapter for their poetry booth at the Mountain Arts and Crafts Fair, held yearly at Cedar Lakes West Virginia, in July.

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A NAME TO CALL ITS OWN

When I envision what my state was like
Before it had a name to call its own,
I see the land and hills where men would strike
Their claims, and build, and where their seed was sown;
Like Daniel Boones, they strode, walked straight and tall,
To match their spirits' need to seek the best;
Content, men found this wilderness their call,
Then gave their kin the only state called "West".
A sturdy Union stands; I see men's pride
In all their toil, and love of home; I see
Their strength and independence, deep and wide,
And know that mountaineers are always free.

Oh, West Virginians know the awful cost
That comes with honor, never to be lost.

— Edna M. Vogel, Ravenswood
FIRST PRIZE

TWO HUNDRED YEARS

Across the land they came
On foot, by oxcart, horse back, covered wagon,
Carrying seeds in a little pouch.
Carrying seeds of a thousand gardens,
Carrying wheat fields, corn bins, sorghum, brown beans
and pumpkin pies
In a little pouch.
Chopping trees, blazing trails, building cabins, houses,
mansions.
Building villages, towns, cities,
Churches, hospitals, schools, factories.
Trappers and salt-makers, loggers and lumber-jacks,
Coal miners, boat builders, farmers and blacksmiths,
Lawmen, politicians, doctors and nurses, teachers, circuit
riders and preachers.
They brought the Book.
And they lived by it, for a while
And they recorded births, deaths and weddings in it.
And some read it and believed its teachings,
And some forgot it.
Some prospered and grew rich, and some knew famine and
hunger.
They knew joy, and pain and sorrow.
They fought wars, and buried their dead.
They had courage and pride and integrity.
They made a flag.
A symbol of all their hopes and dreams.
A symbol of their striving
A symbol of them, the people.
A symbol of the great land.
And their children's, children's children,
Pause, and look back and remember
Two hundred years.

— Regina Skeen, Kentuck
SECOND PRIZE

WHAT IS AMERICA?

What is America;
Home of the brave, land of the free?
A refuge and a shield
From King's tyranny?
A place where Indians roamed at will
Before the Pilgrims came.
Hostile they were
Because the land was home,
And freedom for their tribes.
Then wars were fought,
And blood was shed
In struggles for their world and ours.
Still Kings were fierce,
And dominating even here
Our world a part.
People rebelled and begged relief.
No chance to gain their freedom yet.
More wars then raged;
More blood was shed.
At last relief was growing near.
The leaders sought the perfect plan
For making of a freedom land.
Where all might live, and love abound;
Free from all wars and strife.
Two hundred years have come and gone,
And still our Nation stands in strength;
A Nation won by trials, tears;
A hope of home from birth to grave.
To worship God and live in peace, . . .
Our Home Sweet Home, the Free and Brave!

— Olive A. Divers, Silverton
THIRD PRIZE

JACKSON COUNTY

Yes, I've come to Jackson County
Set here among the hills
Bordered by the Ohio River
Nestled close to Staats Mills
Poetic towns by the names of
Romance and Kentuck to name a few
They say the scenery out there
Gives a person quite a view.

Have you ever been out on Jim Ridge
Or back on Mud Lick Run
What about Old Stone Ridge Road
I hear its traveled some
Why they've even got it graveled
For part of the way
But still its better to travel it
On a pretty day.

From the tops of these hills
There's really quite a view
Of woods, flowers and pastures
Still wet with morning dew
And busy as they always are
Those little honey bees
Searching for their precious nectar
In this honey of a land.

Many days I've ridden "Traveller"
Along those winding roads and streams
Just drinking in God's nature
Believing in his dreams
You'd think I'm doing nothing
That's how peaceful these hills can be
And that must be why West Virginia's
Wild, Wonderful and Free.

— Betty Grugin, Ripley

BETSY ROSS

Nimble fingers
stitched in red
“a flag for our country”,
Betsy said.

Nimble fingers
stitched in white
a flag for our country
big and bright.

Nimble fingers
stitched in blue
a flag for our country
so true.

—Tina Cummings, Staats Mills
FIRST PRIZE: Grade 4

STRANGERS

Down by the river the willows grow
Where the sun is warm and the stream is slow.
A jade bead curtain dipping low
From which the tiny wavelets flow
Sending larger ones before.

Drifting like thoughts that idly tease,
Warmed by the sun and fanned by the breeze,
The ripples blossom with musical ease,
Concentrically widen to touch the trees
That grow on the opposite shore.

The tips in the water there shudder and sigh;
A fanciful strangeness has come drifting by.
A leaf and a ripple from somewhere or why
Stirs the remote little pools as they lie
With a restlessness not felt before.

— Willa McGinley, Ripley

MEMORIES OF YESTERYEAR

I remember, I remember,
The place where I was born.
I could watch from the little window that let heaven in,
Always knocking early at the morn.
The keeper of time never lingered long;
Just brought the day and left alone.
And now I often wish at night,
That the angels of dreams would hasten their journey.

I remember, I remember,
The fragrant flowers, some yellow, some white;
The hollyhocks, and stately iris,
How they beamed in their ecstasy of light.
The syringa bush was the wren's abode.
It was her eggs that my brother in his antics stole,
And without thought placed them in his suit pocket so new,
A youth so bold; yet so backward.

I remember, I remember,
The red maple where my dad hung my rope swing;
A place where my daily cares could be forgotten.
Oh' what joy to my soul this did bring,
Childish wishes within the heart flew in flutters then;
But so overburdened now with worldly cares.
The seasons were tiptoeing, the years rolled by,
But, let me be a child again I pray.

I remember, I remember,
The pear tree blossom, sweet and rare;
The fruit they bore, we gladly kept.
In fond memory, I wish I could turn back the pages of time,
And be amid the throng, so carefree and gay.
Tis childish of me to wish this bliss;
Upon all mortal man,
Make me a child again, just for tonight.

— Elizabeth Stone, Ripley

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

In the Revolutionary War, the
Patriots had to pay dearly for
their glorious win,
By sacrificing the lives of
many wonderful men.
When the war was over and the
victory won,
The men were praised for a job
well done.

— Jill Staats, Ravenswood
SECOND PRIZE: Grade 4

FANTASY DISAPPEARS

Her brilliance
reflected in
the sky for
millions of years,

When men in
cumbersome suits
walked upon her
virgin soil,

Scarring her face
with every step
they took. And
to show that they
had conquered
her they placed
a flag in
her side.

Fantasy disappeared
for young and
old alike.

— Donna Kay Skeen, Ripley

THE CHIPMUNK

A chipmunk peeps through my screen door,
Lifts folded arms to see
If I have seeds that he can store
For times of scarcity.

He hears my step, runs like the wind,
I place seeds in a cup
Beneath a bench for him to find,
And watch him pick them up.

His cheeks puff out with sunflower seeds.
He rushes toward a hole,
Its door is hidden by tall weeds
Around the bird-house pole.

A black line stretches down his back,
A white stripe marks each side.
A brushy tail keeps balancing
The seed-load he will hide.

His fur is soft and musky brown.
He runs. He never walks.
And when he leaps across the lawn
He flees the soaring hawks.

—Naomi D. Cox, Silverton

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

In 1775 Paul Revere took his ride.
What a hard ride that must have been.
I'm glad he was on freedom's side
For it was the thing to win.
Revere went to the steeple,
He flashed on a light,
To warn the people,
The British had come to fight.
Victory we sought.
We did not run or hide.
To Revere we owe a lot
For his famous ride.

— Lisa Scites, Ravenswood

THIRD PRIZE: Grade 4

SO LITTLE TIME

So little time to kiss the chubby toe to make it well,
To say a prayer, a soft goodnight, or fairy tale to tell;
So little time to hear the patter of those tiny feet,
And find wee fingerprints on walls that yesterday were neat.

So little time for loving care, the falls and spills and bumps
Are incidental for they'll still have chicken-pox and mumps;
So little time to hear a cry or sobbing in the night,
Too soon the soft-soled shoes are stiff, and hands are LEFT
and RIGHT.

So little time for childhood, dreams of curly dolls and such,
When Easter eggs and Santa seemed to mean so very much;
So little time for ball or play, a broken window now
Forgiven with the tears, but you were never sure just how.

So little time to gather all the precious memories,
A harvest for the future with hours lonelier than these;
So little time to hold the greatest of the Master's heart,
In joy you'll thrill to know that of it you have been a part.

— Paul R. Moore, Ravenswood

FIVE EASY STEPS TO BECOMING THE PERFECT DAUGHTER

Step number one is an easy thing to do,
Every now and then say, "Mother, I love you".
Step number two means helping around the house
And when Mom doesn't feel well be as quiet as
a mouse.
Step number three deals with boyfriends
and such.
Make sure they have no hair
At least now very much.
Step number four deals with pets and things
like that,
Never get anything smaller than a little
kitty cat.
I'll admit most mothers think pets are nice
But there are those rare occasions
When they look a lot like mice.
The last step says to smile and always act
the way you oughter
These are the things you do
To become the perfect daughter.

— Jamie Jewell, Ripley

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Ben and some of his kin,
Along with some other men
Went for a little swim.
They all saw a bright light,
And Ben thought that he just might
Experiment with his favorite kite.
And when it started to rain,
He went up on a high hill.
There he stood beside an old mill,
And put the kite into the sky,
Not too high, they didn't see him,
When he put a key on the kite.
This was the beginning of electric light.

— Shelley Ritchie, Ravenswood

FIRST PRIZE: Grade 5

I TOOK A WALK

I took a walk through the woods today,
I was only gone for a while.
I sat on a log and watched some ants
Going by in single file.

I heard a squirrel chatter from a tree,
And a blue jay answer back.
I found a nest of sky-blue eggs,
And a possum and a raccoon's track.

I picked a starflower for my hair,
And a brown-eyed Susan, too.
I sat very still and watched a spider
Crawl over the toe of my shoe.

I took a walk through the woods today,
I wish you had gone along.
If you had walked in the woods with me,
Your heart would have filled with song.

— Nancy Merical, Fairplain

OUR NATION, THE UNITED STATES

Time has always been so strong it can't bend,
and too heavy for scales with marks of measure,
so even one unjust act, by the hand
that holds the reigns of authority,
must leave an impression on the minds
of the people that are governed.

Throughout history our hardships
have only served to make us
stronger, and more deserving
of the liberty we prize as much
today as we did yesterday.

Whether we are led by a velvet ribbon
or towed by a heavy chain, we will
never block freedom's path, but rather
point its way, through
old standards and new values.

We are as individual as understanding,
but in our land even the shortest
of men seem taller in the shadow
of an independence that was
voiced by Jefferson and sustained
by John Doe, so that today,
without braid or brass buttons,
we may all stand in pride of
our history; our heritage.

— Linda Poe, Gay

GOD MADE A BOUQUET

When God made mothers,
He used a special clay,
And blessed and loved it
In His special way.

But clay was not all
That the Master used,
For he added a flower
Of every hue.

An ample supply of
Forget-me-nots,
And daisys - she loves me,
She loves me a lot.

Roses He added,
He used so much,
The softness of their petals
Are felt in her touch.

He added a crocus,
The first bloom of spring,
To make mothers happy
And give sorrow wings.

He searched and searched
Until he could find,
A morning-glory
To pluck from the vine.

To add tenderness
And humility too,
For morning glories pray
When day is through.

A Jack-in-the-Pulpit
For mothers' advice;
And a Ladies Slipper,
Oh, mothers are nice.

For God in His wisdom
Made them that way,
When making mothers
He made a bouquet.

— Mary L. Skeen, Ripley

THE CYCLE OF LIFE

I couldn't help notice as I passed by
The lovely tree against the sky
When first I noticed the growth was new
Tiny buds all over it grew

The second time that I passed by
Much lovelier was it to the eye
The buds had blossomed in full bloom
As a bride awaits her groom

The third time that I passed by
Still a beauty to the eye
For such a change from new to old
Lovely colors of red, orange and gold

The last time that I passed by
Twas a lonely tree against the sky
Stripped of its beauty, bare and old
The cycle of life it told

. They couldn't help notice as they
passed by The lovely tree against the sky

— Julie Traylor, Ripley

TALENT

Talent is a God given ability
That the human eye cannot see.
When young we have to try it out,
To determine what it is all about.

That is why young children go to school,
Which now days is the general rule,
To find out what each one does best,
When they are tried out by a test.

It helps to find their uncommon aptitude,
And gives their life a happy mood,
To know they have special ability,
They can use in their work and activity.

It leads to a much happier life,
Free from worry, unrest and strife.
If we use our natural talents right,
It will be acceptable in God's sight.

— Virgil G. Kyger, Ravenswood

DANIEL BOONE

Daniel Boone was a big man.
He knew the forest like the back of his hand.
Boone went a hunting one day at noon.
When he came back he had killed a coon.
He was adopted into a Shawnee tribe,
They thought he loved it, but he wanted to hide.
In his hand he carried a musket gun,
Which he used for food, protection, and sometimes fun.
This old gun he called Ticker-Licker,
On the trigger no one was quicker.
He brought the law to a wilderness land;
That's Daniel Boone a big, big man.

— Karen Bowers, Ravenswood
SECOND PRIZE: Grade 5

IN MEMORIAM

Perhaps the most beautiful words
Recorded in history's pages
Were said about one who was gone:
"Now he belongs to the ages!"

In life his detractors scorned
And mocked his every endeavor.
Descendants of these - - - and his friends
Will honor his name forever.

No doubt it's a vain request,
And it may seem foolish to ask it,
That a person be given his dues
Before being laid in his casket.

One should be able to hope
For understanding, forgiving;
And that words of deserving praise
Be uttered while he's still living.

But such may not be; the storm
Of hatred and prejudice rages
During life; and only in death
May one belong to the ages.

— Lee Mays, Ripley

IN "76"

In "76" we celebrate,
And pick our favorite candidate,
And pick our President fair and square,
And fly pretty rockets through the air.

And today we still celebrate,
And pick our favorite candidate,
And fly pretty rockets through the air,
And pick our President fair and square.

— Janie Morris, New Chance
THIRD PRIZE: Grade 5

MY PRAYER

Lord, give me the strength
To be what you would want me to be,
And to do what you would want me to do.

I find it hard to fight trials and temptations,
But with your Hand guiding mine,
And my eyes upon the throne, I can make it.

But if for once I shall forget you, Lord,
I am able to fall in the sea of doubts and drown,
Unless I call for your help.

My life is like a mountain,
After the storms of life erode the mountain
half away,
There is no hope for it, but that the wind
Might blow back more to add to it
and make it strong.

God does the same for me . . .
If I believe.

Amen

—Kim Merical, Fairplain

I THINK I'LL GO

Spring is enticing me today
To hurry outside to play
Beneath the white cloud ships
That are making repeated trips
Across the deep blue seas
Steered silently by windy breeze.

But I shan't go.

There are clothes in the washing machine,
Twisting and twirling to rub themselves clean;
Dust on the tables and crumbs on the chairs,
A million and one household cares!

An unmade bed in a topsy-turvy room,
A cat-tracked porch in need of scrubbing broom;
Sink bound with dishes from last night's snack,
A work laden day for an aching back!

Yet, if I don't go . . .

Spring doesn't stay around for ages, you know
She puts on her traveling shoes and hastens to go,
And I'm left holding a dish towel in my hand,
A bathtub full of wrinkled clothes . . . and

I think I'll go!

— D. Jean Riley, Ripley

WOODS

Woods after rain,
 Skipping diamonds.
Woods after snow,
 Bridal silence.
Woods after dark,
 Ebony ghosts.
Woods after fire,
 Mourning ashes.

— Don Vogel, Ravenswood

NATIONAL PRIDE THROUGH HISTORY

There were people from across the sea
Who wanted a land that could be free,
They were the Pilgrims, who worked so long
Building a country good and strong.

Our forefathers were people who wanted freedom, too,
But England had them, what could they do?
So one day they all sat down and wrote out their names,
For Independence it was no game.

Now we have freedom which is hard to find.
We are an industrial country and we are not behind.
July 4, 1976, what a day to remember, what a day that will be,
Our 200th birthday, and we are a growing country.

— Melanie Edwards, Evans
FIRST PRIZE: Grade 6

MY HUSBAND AND SPRING CLEANING TIME

My husband doesn't like Spring cleaning
With all the curtains down
And when I move his favorite chair
Boy, - does he ever frown!

He says he can't find anything
In all the mess I make.
I tell him, "I'm cleaning everything up,
Have patience - for heaven's sake!"

The boys won't let me touch their models,
They say I break them all.
So I guess that's something I'll leave alone,
Lined up along the wall.

This playroom has seen many happy days
With two sons and their friends.
I look around and say to myself,
"Why does childhood have to end?"

If this home could talk to anyone,
Many stories it could tell -
But I'm sure the story of Spring time,
It could tell - - - very well.

My husband says he's solved it all
With a fellow up the street -
Who's willing to buy our place right now
And it doesn't have to be neat.

"Why are you straightening everything?"
He says - as I hurry about,
"Just let him come and see this mess - -
I was only kidding anyhow."

Now I know he doesn't care
When all the curtains come down,
Cause deep in his heart he loves our home -
We love this friendly town.

-Dorothy W. Forman, Ripley

THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER

America's starred and striped banner
Waves in the wind with beauty and grandeur.
Betsy Ross created our nation's symbol
Using only her imagination, needle, thread, and thimble.

There were several ideas for a flag of our own,
And Betsy Ross' fame was not yet known.
She sewed it all with a silken thread,
She thought of the colors - - blue, white, and red.

Through wartime or peace
To the sky
That grand old flag
We let it fly.

And all through the history of our days,
Our flag has been cherished, held high, and praised.
For it to be overcome? NEVER !!
It will always be there, the Stars and Stripes Forever!

— Melissa Smith, Ravenswood
SECOND PRIZE: Grade 6

i've worked with tools . . . yes i've made things
with these hands . . . just part of me
made many things . . . extenuations
of the inner me . . . my creations
hoping they may live on
even though i decay and am gone
in the hearts of my fellow man
who will know for him i've toiled this land

— steven perrine, ravenswood

FUNERAL BALLOONS

No flowers at my funeral, please.
Save them for the dead.
Bring bright colored helium balloons
to my grave instead.

I plan to live forever,
God's servant, eternally.
Filled with the helium of hope,
Christ commissions me.

Hope keeps me aloft,
above the earth that holds my string.
Hope sets me free, although still bound,
compelling me to sing.

My song is bright as colored balloons
which only children see.
Bobbing above the mundane heads,
HIS witness I must be.

And when my string to earth is loosed,
release balloons with me.
Rejoice with me. My peace is found.
"My Master Calleth Me."

— Lucinda Pyatt, Ravenswood

IN THE PAST 200 YEARS

In the past 200 years
There have been many tears,
Of the battles we have fought
None was ever really lost.

The many wars and battles
That spread throughout the land,
But of all the toil and strife
There's been help hand-in-hand.

To all the glorious people
We honor and hold dear
Who fought to win and keep our freedom,
We dedicate this Bicentennial year.

—Kim Merical, Millwood

THIRD PRIZE: Grade 6

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, U. S. A.

Who is this person in stately array,
And why is he smiling, so happy and gay?
Now don't tell me that you haven't heard,
This year is precious to him, in a word,
It's the year of the guy's two hundredth birthday,
Which is longer than most of us manage to stay!
He has valiantly struggled, thru war and peace - - -
And I'm mighty happy to be his niece!
Thru the years he's had foes as well as friends:
The weak and downtrodden he always defends.
I'm sure you all know of whom I speak:
He's gracious and cautious, but never meek.
He is ricker than kings, in material wealth,
And has always enjoyed international health.
I hope you all know what I'm trying to say:
Let's wish the old fellow a Happy Birthday!
To be his, I'm sure you're as proud as I am:
Many happy returns of the day, Uncle Sam!

— Osa Mays, Ripley

CHRISTMAS TREES OF SUNSHINE

I know a boy - - likewise a girl;
His hair has wave and hers has curl.
They often have me in a whirl - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

He is seven; she is five.
They like to read and fish and dive.
They make me feel so much alive - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

Like Christmas lights they wink and blink.
Like sunshine, they can turn me pink!
They often know just what I think - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

Their warmth can set a room aglow.
Like pine, they sparkle in the snow.
Yet too, they love the sun, I know - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

With them Life's just a holiday.
They will do work - - but love to play!
Their laughter's but a breath away - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

They talk and skitter all day long.
They try to learn what's right and wrong.
They make my life perpetual song - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

If I am lonely, sad, and blue,
They always know just what to do.
They whisper softly, "I love you" - -
My Christmas Trees of Sunshine.

So when it's time to say, "Good-bye",
I'll oft remember with a sigh
God richly blessed me from on high - -
With Christmas Trees of Sunshine!

1776, what does it mean?

Patriots who so bravely gave their lives
 For a dream of freedom's gates,
 Who died on bloody battlefields
 With bodies lying round,
 All to hear the cry of the victory march,
 To go back home again;
 Thinking of dear families,
 Longing to see their faces, while nervously
 Looking over the sun-baked barricades,
 Wondering if tomorrow they would still be here,
 And if victory or defeat was close at hand.

1776, what does it mean?

Women who so bravely gave up
 Their husbands and boys,
 Maybe never to see them again,
 Fighting in their own way the British
 Close at hand, worrying, wondering,
 Making bandages and bullets
 So their men could fight and win.

1776, what does it mean?

The brave men who ruled our country
 Through the years.
 The women, some of them fighting
 Bravely beside the men.
 The Constitution which men have written.
 The flag Betsy Ross has sewn.
 The victories our country has won,
 And not only in our wars.
 The simple idea of freedom's note.
 That's what 1776 means to me.

—Sandy Anderson, Ripley

FOREFATHER

Where we stand
He cleared the land
With a strong hand.

The cabin grew
From logs he hewed
With axe, steel-blue.

The seeds were sowed,
Cared for and hoed
By traditional code.

He lived by signs
And Good Book lines
In a world of pines.

He built a place
For the mountain race,
Freedom's base.

—Harold Slate, Sissonville
from MOUNTAIN FARM BOY

WILD WONDERFUL AND FREE

