

HIGH SCHOOL TOUGH BOY

When I think of my days at Mount Jefferson High,
I remember a bully named Barney McBride
And the day he was changed, like a diamond from coal,
From a boy of the fist to a man of the soul.

Now this Barney McBride was tall, slender, and lean.
But his speed is what made him a fighter so mean
That even the big boys would rarely decide
To take on the likes of this Barney McBride

And when no one accepted his challenge to fight,
He'd find someone to pick on and push him outright
Until the poor victim was forced to defend.
And everyone knew how the fist fight would end.

Then one day a newcomer came to the school.
I could tell right away he was nobody's fool.
He seemed somewhat different than most of us guys,
There was something about that look in his eyes.

And everyone liked him from deep down inside,
Except for the bully named Barney McBride.
And everyone knew that the day was in sight
When the bully would force the newcomer to fight.

And just as we thought, the big day soon arrived.
It was just after school, about three-twenty-five.
A big crowd had gathered to see who would win,
For none could be certain despite Barney's grin.

Now Barney stood tensed with his fists at a pose
While the newcomer stood more relaxed and composed,
As if he had no such intention to fight,
Though his face showed no fear, no yearning for flight.

And such was the look in the newcomer's eyes,
I expected to see him lash out in surprise.
And for the first time I felt some kind of hope
That the bully had come to the end of his rope.

The next thing I knew, Barney lashed out a fist.
The newcomer's dodge was so quick that he missed.
The crowd cried a cheer out of sheer joyous pride
To see someone swifter than Barney McBride

But, though he made good against Barney's attack,
The newcomer didn't attempt to strike back.
And soon the fight ended without a real win;
The only thing wiped out was Barney's old grin.

The next day in class, I saw Barney McBride.
He still seemed himself, looking haughty and snide,
With a dare in his eye and a sneer on his lip;
He was snug in the thought he'd still never been whipped.

But then something happened which none would expect.
And up to this day I cannot recollect
A more heart-wrenching scene than the one that occurred
When his pride was wiped out by the newcomer's word.

For just as the class became quiet and calm,
The newcomer showed with a child in each arm.
They were both little girls at age two, maybe three,
And were dressed like a flower from the head to the knee.

And something from heaven was felt in the air,
Of which even the bully seemed somewhat aware.
And the newcomer faced us and started to speak.
He spoke in a tone that was humble and meek.

He told of his folly in years that were past,
How he'd dropped out of school from the head of his class
To pursue his own selfish ambition and pride
For becoming a boxer, well known far and wide.

He told how he'd married the girl of his charm
And had fathered the children he held in his arms.
He told how these little ones changed his whole view,
How their innocent love had him finally subdued

Till he'd lost all desire to box and to fight...

Then the newcomer turned to face yesterday's foe,
And the bully sat still with his eyes on the floor.
And the newcomer said that, in God's holy truth,
This Barney resembled his own prideful youth.

He explained how in yesterday's fight he could see
That his foe, like all boys, was a father-to-be,
How he'd seen, in his mind's eye, two babes like his own
In the arms of that boy who was fighting alone.

Then Barney got up, to my utter surprise;
He approached the newcomer, with tears in his eyes.
And all he could do was to offer his hand
In a gesture of love to his newcomer friend.

C. Whicker

MY BROTHER, FRED

I was sixteen when he was three
And I would bounce him on my knee
And lift him high up in the air
And we were quite a happy pair

And he would tackle me in play
And I would fake it, giving way
And fall down quickly on the ground
And we would wrestle round and round

And I was careful as could be
For he was not as big as me....

But what is this? The scene has changed!
We find ourselves all rearranged
He's twenty now, I'm thirty-three
He's BIGGER than I'll ever be!

But we are still a happy pair
He likes to lift me in the air
And we still wrestle like we did
But I am now the little kid

And he is careful as can be
For he is not as small as me

A MOTHER'S LOVE

I stood before the gallows with the multitude who came
To see the execution of a criminal of fame
Whose wicked deeds were published forth for all the world to see.
And now he stood behind the noose as quiet as could be.

I moved a little closer, for I thought I saw a tear.
Perhaps he was afraid to die, thought I, with death so near.
But no, 'twas not the fear of death that caused the man to cry,
His dying words would soon permit no room to wonder why.

For when the crowd was finally bade to hush their mocking noise,
These words he spake, in reverence, with humility and poise:

"MOTHER.....I'M SORRY.....I LOVE YOU....."

And now the crowd stood silent, for his words were not expected.
And I wondered, was his mother here, or had she been protected
From partaking of a cup no loving mother ought to drink?
When from the crowd a feeble voice caused every heart to sink:

"OH, MY BABY.....I LOVE YOU TOO!"

And suddenly I wished that I had never come to see
The thing that in a moment caused my stricken heart to bleed.
No, I never shall forget the desperation, the despair,
The anguish, born in silence, by most all who gathered there.

For I had come to witness what I thought would entertain,
But after what had happened I would never feel the same.

Late that night, when sleep had finally closed my weary eyes,
I dreamed a dream that caused my sorry heart begin to rise.
For in my dream I stood amidst a vast and glorious throng;
It must have been a multitude at least ten billion strong!

And somehow every soul was soon enabled to behold
The judgment bar of God, of which I'd learned from days of old.
A name was called, and soon a man stepped up to face the bar.
His handsome face was marred by guilty conscience, like a scar.

And suddenly I recognized that fearful, sorry face
Of him who stood before the Lord, his judgement to embrace.
It was the face I'd seen on earth that awful, fateful day;
The same it was whose death I'd seen for crimes he'd had to pay.

His judgement was not slow, for he confessed his sins in tears.
And gently spake the Savior, to alleviate his fears:
"My child," said He, thou didst not live for mercy while on earth
Though countless times I called thee, in my knowledge of thy worth.

"And greater mercy would I give than that which thou hast gained,
But mercy given carelessly would only add to shame.
For mercy is for changing men from filthy into clean:
'Tis not for men who, choosing filth, their filthiness to screen.

"Thou knowest that I cherish thee and still desire thy love.
But where I am thou canst not come, for all is clean above."

On bended knee, the man responded, sorrow on his face:
"I'm glad the test is over, Lord, for now I know my place.
And I would like to serve Thee, if I may, from lower sphere,
Where Thou art not, but where Thy Spirit dries the bitter tear."

"For I have proved myself unfit to rule in places high.
Nor do I want such burden, Lord, I will not now deny,
For well I know that only those perfected are prepared
To hold the weighty blessings men like me could never bear."

"And now, oh Lord, there's one more thing I meekly ask of Thee:
Since filthiness and weaknesses must now remain with me,
Wilt Thou cause my sins be understood, my soul be loved
By those with whom Thou sendest me as well as those above?"

"For I do not desire to work with those who love me not:
The hatred I endured on earth let not be now my lot!"
And then the Lord, in meekness, said, "I've worked out thy defense,
And none shall feel more loved than thou when I shall send thee hence."

Then called the Lord a woman's name, who stepped forth from the throng
Her eyes were like unearthly fire; her hair was white and long.
Her face was bathed in beauty as she gently kissed the other;
To my surprise I recognized the woman was his mother!

The woman turned to speak her heart to all, for all to hear.
The brightness of her beauty shown to beckon every ear.
She told about that man who, while on earth, had been her boy,
About when he was little and the growth he'd caused, the joy.

She told about the basic goodness in his troubled soul.
And when she spoke about his sins she said that all should know
That in the heat of battle men are often prone to sin,
And earth had been a battlefield for all the sons of men.

"Shall we," said she, "belittle every soldier boy who fell?
Or shall we praise their efforts, heal their wounds, and bid them well?
I want to show with clarity for every soul to see
That every sin my boy has done has been deception's fee."

"For earth and hell and flesh combined to turn my boy corrupt,
And he was not as strong as some; I tried to bear him up."
And then her eyes, in sadness, softened on her lowly son:
"If he had put his faith in God, he surely would have won,"

"But now the battle's over and my boy has learned his place.
He's satisfied that God is just; his life was not a waste,
For he will not be placed again upon the battle front.
He knows his limitations now, and all that he could want"

"Is to serve the God who loves him and whose faithfulness is free."
Then suddenly the woman's voice arose in mighty plea:
"And now to all the creatures of our God, I ask of you,
Despise ye not this fallen child, for he is priceless too!"

And then the vast and glorious host arose as with one heart,
And every hand applauded as they watched the man depart.
And every eye was filled with tears of sorrow and of joy
And every heart was swollen for that mother's little boy!

Then I awoke, my pillow wet with tears that I had shed.
Where once my heart was broken I felt comforted instead.
I pondered long upon the glorious vision I had seen.
There seemed no room for question as to what it all could mean,

For I would never see a hardened sinner quite the same,
Nor would I see mortality as just a fighting game:
For now I felt that every soul, both wicked, weak, and good
Would bow the knee and know that he is cherished, understood.

And by His love our God would win the willing heart of all.
And surely none would be forever broken from the Fall!

C. Whicker

MY DADDY AND MY FATHER

I don't know why, but back when I was small
I had two friends who stood out more than all.
It seemed to me the one was like the other.
I knew them as my daddy and my Father.

My daddy wasn't like the kind of dads you often see,
For it seemed to me his very life was lived just for me.
So you can understand me when I tell you what I said,
That my dad was like my Father and my Father like my dad
In the eyes of one so young as I when I was but a lad.

I knew there was a difference 'tween the two, there had to be
For my Father lived in heaven and my daddy lived with me.
But when daddy always prayed at my side so reverently
He made me feel my Father, too, was always close to me.

And whenever I was chastened by my daddy's stinging hand
I never felt but what my Father made the same demand.
And when daddy always read to me and held me in his arms
I could not help but feel my Father's love so pure and warm.

No, I could not see the one without the other,
For my daddy was the image of my Father.
My daddy and my Father, they were one.
How blessed I was to be their little son.

Then came the awful day when I thought that I could see
My daddy and my Father almost seemed to disagree.
But quickly came my comfort when I heard my daddy cry:
"The fault is mine, for God is true; a sinful man am I!"

I knew then that my daddy did not really disagree,
It's just he was not happy 'cause my Father was displeased.

And now I sit and ponder...

If daddy had been angry and rebelled against my Father
By insisting that his sin was not a sin,
I would have had to choose to follow one or else the other,
And what an awful choice it would have been.

How painful is the thought, for I revered them both, you see.
To follow one without the other seemed impossible to me.

Well, I saw a long repentance, for my daddy was in chains.
And he expressed his sorrow while his misery remained.
But through it all, I never really felt I had to choose
Between daddy and my Father, keep the one, the other lose.

For my daddy left no room to think
That the cup he was required to drink
Was anything but evidence
Of Father's good and loving sense.

And now that I have grown from boy to man
I think that I can see my Father's hand.
For, if my soul is honest, I cannot help but see
That the weakness in my daddy was present, too, in me.

For there were times when visions of my daddy's consternation
Were all that kept my weakness from succumbing to temptation.
And even as it is, my weakness more than just annoyed me.
When in my pride I felt unloved, it could have well destroyed me.

And if my dad had given forth excuses for his sin,
I might have just believed him and in greater darkness been.

And so I see that through my daddy's suffering and pain,
I was preserved, in large degree, from suffering the same.
For well I know this weakness was in me before my birth,
And it was wisdom in our God I be dad's son on earth.

For as the saying goes, two birds killed with but one stone,
My daddy's grand deliverance has brought about my own.

And I still can't see the one without the other,
For my daddy is the image of my Father.
My daddy and my Father, they are fast becoming one.
How blessed I am, as always, to be their little son.

C. Whicker

MEEK AND LOWLY OX

OH, MEEK AND LOWLY OX, HOW GREAT THOU ART!
THOU DIDST NOT BRAG OF THY GREAT STRENGTH
WHEN PULLING HEAVY LOADS ACROSS THE PLAINS
TO EASE THE BURDENS OF THY MAKER'S SONS!

FOR GREATER IS THY STRENGTH THAN ANY MAN'S.
YET, CANST THOU SAY AT ANY TIME THY HEART WAS PRONE TO BOAST?
OR DIDST THOU SAY WITHIN THY HEART, "I'M EQUAL, GIVE ME RIGHTS!"?
OR WAST THOU DISTRAUGHT BECAUSE OF THY LOWLY STATION?

NAY, FOR NEVER DIDST THOU KNOW THE SELFISH FIRE OF HAUGHTY PRIDE!
AND NEVER WOULDST THOU BOAST OF THY GREAT STRENGTH AS LOWLY SERVANT!
AND SURELY IN THE KINGDOM OF THY MAKER THOU SHALT DWELL
AS FULL OF LIGHT AS ANY HIGHER CREATURE!

THEN SHALT THOU KNOW, AND SO BE GLAD,
THAT THE FULLEST JOYS ARE NOT FOR MAN ALONE,
THOUGH MAN SHALL ALWAYS RULE THEE FOR THY SAKE.
ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL, WHO LIVE THE LAWS OF THEIR CREATION
SHALL HAVE ETERNAL JOY THEREIN, FOR THUS HATH GOD ORDAINED!

AND, JUST AS GOD HATH MADE THEE STRONG ON EARTH,
THAT MAN SHOULD FEEL THY WORTH AND NEED THY HELP,
SO SHALL IT BE IN KINGDOMS HIGH WHERE GODS SHALL DWELL,
THAT NONE SHOULD SAY, NOT EVEN GODS, "I HAVE NO NEED OF THEE!"

OH, THAT MAN WOULD LEARN FROM THEE, THOU GOODLY OX!
AND SAY WHAT THOU DOEST SEEM TO SAY WITHIN:
"I AM A LOWLY SERVANT UNTO THEE THAT I MAY PROVE THY WORTH TO ME,
AND PATIENTLY I WAIT FOR GOD TO PROVE MY WORTH TO THEE."

C. Whicker