Night Ride From Denver

Lynn Thorpe*

*Iowa State University
both of our hides for messin' up your shoes—now, find a stick and scrape it off while I get some hay to finish cleaning you up."

The man picked up a handful of hay and followed the boy to the door.

"Didn't you step in that stuff when you were a kid?" asked the boy as he scraped at his shoe with a stick.

"Not in my good shoes I didn't! Your grandmother made sure of that—okay, that ought to do it; now get in the car."

The boy looked back at the stalls.

"Sure wish I could see a dead horse."

Above the barn the weathercock whipped in the breeze as the third generation walked to the car.

**Night Ride From Denver**

*by Lynn Thorp*

*English, Sr.*

We let them blur—our eyes—and fastened them
Upon the narrow line that split the road,
Unconcerned (though not) that mountain troughs
Received and held the sun's descending dye.

"It won't be long. . . ."

"Yes . . . I can't forget. . . ."

His mouth curved up—then straightened out: "I know."

The night pressed on; its highway miles that stretched
To the swallow of the sky. Gas stops, the sage
Become plowed fields; with radio blares and wind;
And jading hum of tires' spinning speed;
And talk—the clock-like meaningless kind of that moves
As simply as a second hand. At dawn

We reached the plains where silken lines of rain
 Came slipping down behind—a curtain soft
To blot recall of summer days now past.
I shrugged and turned to him: "It's better now. . . ."

"I know," he said again. We understood.