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Circumference

Marj McAlister

Far from the dreams of a barefoot girl scuffing dust along a cow path— Far from the peach-blown thoughts while sitting in a tree— Far from those midnight mental wanderings after being awakened by coyotes' calls—

Few, if any, of these cotton candy wishes came true. No doubt a good thing. These impractical pictures from childhood and teens would be awkward as stories of Cinderella or Red Riding Hood. They served their purpose at the time, but best forgotten when reality veers 180 degrees from daydreams.

My true romance was played on a stage a few miles in circumference from where I spent the lazy days daydreaming. Oklahoma City is the center of this circle; I would not know how to live anywhere else, but have sometimes wondered about it. My life has been lived on a dot on the map. So scratch the romance of faraway places and Prince Charming riding from afar.

My serious suitor arrived during my mid-twenties. No matter he worked downtown and traveled a great deal. He was most intelligent and industrious and became head of his department and a vice-president of his company. I was proud of him and felt that I had a part in helping him. Three wonderful children, now grown, completed the picture. Forty years together were accompanied by problems, but we achieved a comfortable romance. His sudden fatal heart attack left me

like an empty paper bag bouncing down the street. Although the adjustment was difficult, somehow I learned to take care of things that I hadn't done before.

I learned to live alone, giving no thought to having it otherwise. Yet, into my circumference came a kind, thoughtful man who seemed to have a talent for empathy. Our spouses had died near the same time a few years before. It seemed logical to sell our houses and begin again in a new one. For seven years, we have for the most part enjoyed a happy arrangement. As with car rentals, when you are second, you must try harder.

It seems I am to spend the rest of my days within this small circle. It has been a wonderful life. I have had many blessings which might not have occurred in distant places. I leave my shortcomings, which are many, as they lie. I would change them, but cannot.

Most of all, I feel thankfulness—for blessings beyond deserving. Romance dwells in a small circumference. Certainly, love has not passed me by.

*(MARJ MCALISTER, of Oklahoma City, is a successful free-lance writer and is an active member of both the PSO—Poetry Society of Oklahoma—and the OWFI—Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc.) **

Design By Tommy Campbell