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Outline For A Biography

Margie Cooke Porteus

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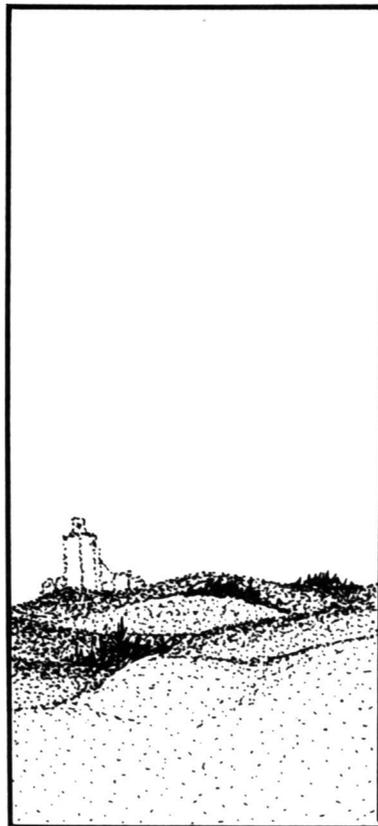
By Margie Cooke Porteus

She stood at the open kitchen door and looked west past the edge of town, the railroad, and the wheat fields to where the sky touched the ground. When she had asked grown-ups how far away was that sky-earth line, she had received only vague answers. She had watched red dust storms roll in from that direction; often there were vivid sunsets, and once she had seen a tornado touch ground. But that proved to have been only two miles away.

If she looked a little to the left, she would see the dirt cellar where there was the damp dirt smell and where the family sometimes went during a storm. Past the cellar was the swing in the grape arbor that led to the outhouse, but her eye always returned to that mysterious distant line that was the cause of longing.

Years later when her father was buried on a hot windy day, she had stood in the cemetery, and that same vague mystery returned to haunt her.

As a teenager, her dreams were often focused on the scene out the window of the second-floor Study Hall



in the high school. She would look over the town, watching the train as it slowed past the new grain elevators and stopped at the station. Farther on was the mound, really a large round hill that stood a landmark on the flat land.

Family--births, deaths, celebrations; friends--parties, conversations, secrets; school--teachers, classes, activities; weather--blizzards, hot muggy days, gray dust storms; Sundays--church, Sunday School, Sunday clothes; depression, war; and over all these the lure of that distant earth-sky line.

Each of these, my memories, could become a chapter in a book; and with slight variations, many who grew up in Western Oklahoma could use the same outline.

Margie Cooke Porteus received her public-school education in Thomas and her higher education from Southwestern. Now a retired teacher, she lives in Paonia, Colorado. As one of WESTVIEW'S earliest contributors, she is also one of the most valued. ♠

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