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— a woman who is still among us —

The Woman Who Faces The Wind

by Betty Jo Jenkins Denton

Her voice may be a little louder,
Her tonal quality somewhat raspy,
Sentences connected with a liberal helping of *and ahs*,
This combination Arkie-Okie-Texan twang.
Her heavily sprayed coiffure knows a scarf--
For weekdays a kerchief is fine;
Silk or chiffon is a must when she goes to town.
This woman knows how to face the wind:
She typifies the Western Oklahoma spirit woman.

I have seen her chop the firewood and
Make lye soap for rub-board laundry,
Harness a team of mules, while the "scratch" angel food cake
Baked in the oven.

She can set and regulate a cultivator, planter, or plow.
She knows the sweat and toil of any man.
Yet she possesses the essence of femininity as she coaxes a
Bloom from a battered plant.

She is intimate with floods, tornadoes, drought, and hail.
Yet, through it all, I have seen her face the wind.
She contends with a "crop failure" of her own too.
But this survivor is an expert at "making do."

From her, a setting hen cannot hide her eggs.
Likewise, her children know her tenaciousness to search,
Seek, and find.

I have seen her open-arms welcome to unexpected company,
Saying and meaning that there's always room for one more,
Putting on a fresh, white, starched apron,
Wiping the flour from her nose.

I watched with admiration as she faced the wind.

She has strong convictions on education, family, church, and country.

I saw her emerge as an individual long before ERA.
I have seen her welcome, with quiet resignation, both birth and death.

I have seen her stare resolutely at hopelessness with HOPE.
Yet today I saw her trembling with grief and sorrow,
Saw the look of bewilderment on her face:
Her child had died before her----
Dear God, help her as she faces the wind.