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It Was Ossie Done It

by Juanita Noah

*We went to see 'em one Sunday after dinner, in Oklahoma.
The men folks gathered at the barn,
The women 'round the fireplace, dipping snuff.
Was a quilt stack over near the window,
Quilts was aswaying, reaching near to the ceiling.
He was laying on top, quiet, listening in,
Wicked grin, Mother said, "You do beat all,
How did you climb way up there?"
It was Ossie done it.*

*Sister going to graduate from high school.
Got her a real pretty class ring,
Held out her hand, "Like my new ring?"
"Naw, ain't got any diamonds in it."
Sister's fella gave her an engagement ring.
"How do you like this ring?"
It's got a diamond in it."
"Don't look like no damn diamond to me."
"Who hurt your feelings, Sister?"
It was Ossie done it.*

*Mr. Goldsby raised the best watermelons,
Great big ones, just about to get ripe.
Went out one morning to gather the first one.
Found 'em stomped to mush, vines tore up.
Everybody went to church, come Sunday.
Songleader couldn't find the songbooks,
Piano player tried to chord some,
Couldn't even remember all of Amazing Grace,
Finally found the books up under the church house.
It was Ossie done it.*

*Little Truman started to school.
Only boy with sisters out of school.
Everybody walked home together.
"I'm gonna cut your ears plum off, Truman."
Threw Truman's pencil back down the road,
Come to the bridge, took Truman by the heels,
Hung him over the edge. "Gonna drop you, Boy."
No one dared help Truman, pale with fright.
"Gonna throw this dinner bucket to kingdom come."
It was Ossie done it.*

*Schoolhouse was full of smoke, flue wouldn't draw.
Stove pipes clogged, let's cleam 'em. Wasn't clogged.
Big boys climbed on top the schoolhouse,
Two boards laid across the chimney, half a day wasted.
Old gray mule roamed everywhere, no one claimed it.
Stiff with age, so old could scarcely move.
Seen that mule running like a white streak,
Someone hanging to his ragged tail,
Hitting the ground 'bout every twenty feet.
It was Ossie done it.*

*Them good laying hens stopped laying, sudden like.
Two big baskets of eggs hid in the hay loft.
Took 'em to town a horse back, didn't break any.
Stopped by just as school was letting out,
Had a candy bar for every single kid, even Truman.
Charlie and Annie moved down to the next community,
So much house plunder, couldn't take the chickens.
Be back to get 'em in a day or two.
Be all right-but not a chicken was there,
It was Ossie done it.*

*Walking down the road, a car came pattering past,
Jump on the back bumper and ride a ways,
Turn loose and fall off, never did get hurt.
Young girl had her appendix out, didn't wake up,
Buried her down there in the cemetery,
That night, boys playing mumble peg by the creek,
Somebody, wearing the coffin wrappings
Came, singing low, When the Saints Go Marching In.
Skeered 'em nigh to death, one boy had a nervous rigor.
It was Ossie done it.*

*Beginning to grow up, eyeing the girls,
Going into town to the picture show.
Got in a fight, whipped one old boy,
Whipped the lawman, too, for interfering.
Land in the pen, shore as twice two is four.
Old friend from California said, "Read in a paper
About Hubert Sipes, honored by the town of Palo Alto,
Meritous service, setting up Missions and shelters, preaching,
Say, wasn't that the real name of _____"
"Yep, it shore was, and who'd ever a thought it?"
It was Ossie done it.*