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Leaving The Old Home / NOW / GRANDFATHER

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Olive DeWitt

Evelyn Bachmann

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— a prize-winning poem on a traumatic experience

Leaving The Old Home

by
Ernestine Gravley

The day my dad unhooked the plow
and sold the cow
with spotted hide. . .
his joy and pride,
he lingered dreaming at the gate.
The hour was late,
the sun was low;
we had to go.
I saw him touch the lilac tree
then turn to me. . .
no time to pack,
no looking back.

— the passing of years —

NOW

— by Olive Dewitt

Now buttercups grow
where buffalo wallowed
one hundred years ago

GRANDFATHER

— by Evelyn Bachmann

I remember sitting stiffly in silence on Sunday,
Itching under my starchy ruffles,
Afraid to scratch or giggle,
Under the dark, dour gaze of my grandfather.
He had sired ten children,
Reared them all by rising before dawn to milk and plow.
“We never lit a lamp in summertime,” he used to brag.
I never heard him raise his voice,
Or saw him strike a child.
I know now he was a kindly man
Only set in his ways,
On how children should behave,
And when to rise and shine,
Even when he visited us in town.
Once I set the clock back on a dare.
He didn't rise 'til seven
And swore he must be sick,
And I was scared, but glad
That little girls were supposed to be silent.