

Harvest Parade

By Cammie Corlas Quinn

One cloudy October morning I walked to our small-town Illinois post office carrying a birthday package for my mother. My mother had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. I trudged through a quagmire of self-pity, fearing this package might be the last I would ever send her in our long relationship of letters and packages.

The dreary day exaggerated my despair. As I dodged the cracks in the sidewalk, I lamented the passing of time, the progression of generations, and the inevitable march towards old age and death. One generation—twenty years—seemed so short to me now. With my mother’s generation passing, mine was next on the firing line. What had I done in my fifty-plus years to make a difference? Lately, it seemed that even the most passionate works of my hands and heart had failed. No one had visibly changed because of my efforts. Wouldn’t it be better to mind my own business and sit quietly in my house for the rest of my days?



The scent of burning leaves lifted my head. Like smelling salts, that scent has always stimulated my spirits. Then I beheld a sight that took my breath away. A long line of grain trucks, with drivers’ flannel-shirted elbows pointing out the windows, awaited their turn at the elevator. Golden mounds of corn rose above the wagon beds, spilling over, wafting sweet-scented grain dust into the cool air. One truck after another waited in line, backed all the way across Main Street, continuing down the next street.

My eyes filled with tears. Farms and farmers have always spoken a special language to my heart. My mother grew up on a farm. As a child, I visited that farm every Sunday afternoon. I learned how to pray outdoors in the cow pasture. It was, and still is, my favorite piece of ground on this Earth.

As I watched the wagons creep forward toward the grain elevator, I realized that these men and women had labored long and hard for this moment. They had planted the seeds, beaten back weeds and insects, wept when the flooding rains came, replanted seeds, repaired broken combines, and labored with inadequate sleep to haul in the harvest. Through it all, God had sent the much-needed gentle rains and sunshine, day after day, to germinate and grow the seeds. Harvest time had come.

Little did these farmers know what their patient journey meant to me. They may have been anxious to unload their grain and get back to the farm, but they were unknowingly assembling a parade for a stranger carrying a package to the post office, unknowingly proclaiming, “Your harvest will come!”

God speaks prolifically, sometimes without a single word. Today He assured me with a procession of grain trucks that the fruit of our efforts is often invisible to us, but as long as we follow God's pathway, our harvest time will come.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. (Galatians 6:9 KJV)