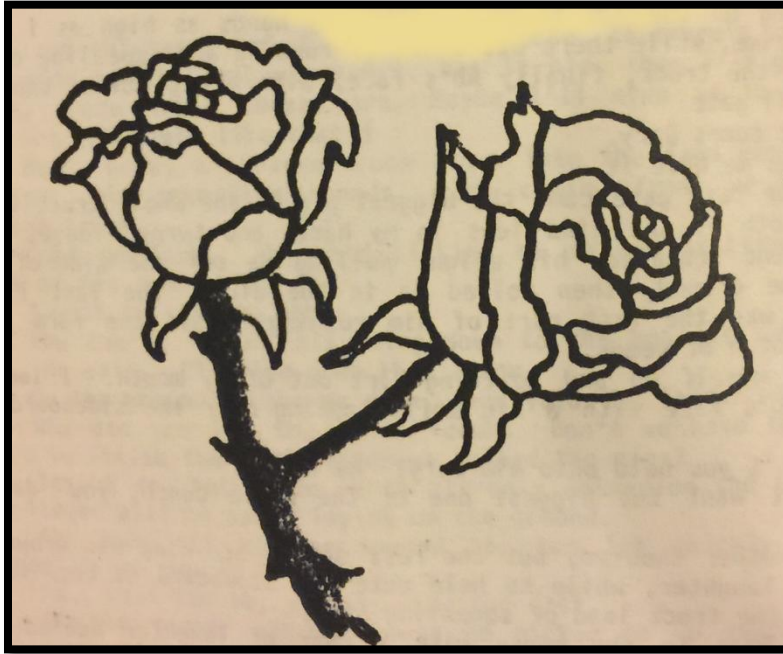


DUST

FERTILIZER



(Setting on top of the storm cellar a short person can see for a long way besides nobody will make me get down. It seemed that up here everyone can see me while they're moving trucks, cars, or the tractor around. That car looks like Uncle Sam's car. Well that is his car how do you suppose he found me a way out here? I'll bet if Dad hadn't pulled all those weeds down Uncle Sam would have drove right on past the weed farm without even seeing me.)

Uncle Sam turned into the driveway then drove past the cellar and down the slope toward the bid Dutch barn Southwest of the house. Laying my rubber doll down on top of the cellar, not wanting Uncle Sam to know that a big boy like me carried a doll, I jumped down from the cellar top and ran down the slope following his car to see why he had came all that way just to see me then drove right past me.

Uncle Sam was a thin man with a very serious looking face that would make you think he would be a very hard person to talk to, but when he talked to you his countenance completely changed and all the harsh looking features turned into soft kindness with the most mellow voice you would ever want to hear. The thing I liked most about talking with him was that when he talked to you all of his attention was directed to you only, perhaps that was a quality he had acquired because of his wife, Aunt Myrtle [Faw] Hooper, who had always been deaf.

Hi Uncle Sam. What are you doing here? Why didn't you stop up at the house? Where's Aunt Myrtle?

"Wait a minute Gary. You have too many questions. One question at a time." he said, behind an amused smile as he stepped out of his car closing the door behind him.

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Now, I came out here to get some fertilizer.

I didn't stop up at the house because the fertilizer is down here at the barn.

Your Aunt Myrtle is at our house preparing a rose bed and waiting for me to return with the fertilizer.

He grinned with amusement and bent down putting his hands on his knees so he could talk real confidential.

Shhhhh. You won't say anything about this in front of the ladies will you?

Shhhhh. No.

"Fertilizer is manure." he said, with a wrinkle of his nose.

Oh.

He walked around behind his car and opened the trunk taking out a big round metal bathtub just like the one we used since we moved to the weed farm from town.

Are you going to take a bath Uncle Sam?

"No." he said with a grin.

What are you going to do with the tub?

I'm going to put the fertilizer in it.

The manure?

Shhhhh, your mother will hear and that is a secret just among us boys.

Taking the tub over to a large pile of manure next to the barn he began to fill it.

Uncle Sam.

What.

What are you going to do with that cow shit?

(Sometimes Uncle Sam just starts laughing real hard for no reason he must think of a lot of funny things.)

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Putting the filled tub into the trunk of his car, he drove back up the slope to the house leaving the trunk lid of his car open, then he stopped in the yard to talk with Dad real quietly like he does then he started laughing real loud. (Dad always laughs at Uncle Sam's stories.) Then he drove away in the direction of town forgetting to close his trunk lid again.

I hope he doesn't lose his tub of cow shit.

Uncle Sam! UNCLE SAM!!!

(I wish he could have heard me. I think he forgot his fertilizer.)

DUST