

Beating Heart

Sometimes I close my eyes to hear
The roar of quiet and the din of calm.
I squint so hard, that I bring a tear
While darkness hides my sight from harm.

Like steel, the angst of peace grabs hold
And lets my pulse pound loud and clear.
The black behind my lids rings bold
And amplifies inside my ears.

Most youth, they never see this sound.
Most elders never concentrate
On silence as their hearts do pound
When age begs them to meditate.

I'm lucky, I guess, to have the time
To sit real still and watch the dark.
With a dog on-lap and a brew sublime,
My eyes will hear a beating heart.

Buddy Armour

A Civil War

The news hawks claim we can't unite-
"Our nation is a buckling floor.
The anger won't end without a fight."
Some fear there'll be a civil war.

One leans to the right; one leans to the left.
The two extremes refuse to meet.
Only one side is good; while the other's bereft
Of all willingness to ever accept defeat.

No side considers compromise;
No side considers a move toward center.
No side can stand to be thought wise;
They deny Summer's heat or the cold of Winter.

This civil war they say we need,
This conflict that will save our land,
Who will fight and die and bleed
And save us from this stubborn stand?

Must they die - the ones who make truth moot?
Execute the ones who lie or steal?
Should we vanquish the ones who refuse to shoot
Their friends with whom no truth appeals?

Is Liberty achieved with the death of those
Who strain to know what Freedom means?
Is Peace achieved when we seek to throw
Our violence at those we knew as teens?

How odd to call it "a civil war"
And claim it's what this land requires
To right this ship that needs no more
Than Civility and Honesty and Wisdom inspired?

Buddy Armour

The Laughinghouse

My Sophomore and my Junior days
I learned to think. I loved those years.
They shaped my life in many ways.
I found great gifts, overcame many fears.

High Math was a class I really enjoyed.
Charlie Snyder, he stressed those planes and equations.
Geometry, Algebra are tools I employed
To later design and solve situations.

French class for me had its difficulties.
Prushinski taught me to speak Francais.
My French Three prof was Fred Epley.
He had us read de Saint-Exupery.

But English and writing, I loved the best:
Analyses of poems and plays and short stories.
Shirley White equipped us to meet all tests
Any college might give in a lit laboratory.

Ed Laughinghouse was our principal's name.
In summers, I would mow his grass.
He paid me well, I'm happy to claim;
His remittances always paid in cash.

Ed's students did flourish in his two short years;
I saw his pride in that storied crowd.
We worked as a school to be top-tiered
To make him happy, to make us proud.

As principals go, Ed was quite astute.
His students, he knew, and he cared about.
He could offer a smile with a firm rebuke,
But learning was still fun in his laughing house.

Buddy Armour

The Feed Store

Bird seed, whole corn, that's what I buy
I get them at the farm supply.
The birds and squirrels devour the seed.
The deer and crows, they come to feed
On corn I spread upon the ground.
They need to eat to live, I've found.

I heard old Jack at the store insist
That predators leave if no food exists.
Some man had lost a pet or two.
He'd ask old Jack what he could do.
"Just keep your cats inside your house.
Coyotes move on if no food's about."

But Jack talked on, volunteered his plan:
"Our country refuses to understand;
Just starve the illegals. Don't let them eat.
Very soon, they'll turn back, they will retreat.
We're way-too soft! We get involved!
They'll go back for food. Our problem is solved!"

A trip to the store to get some food
For creatures God made who do me good.
Their beauty, their lives, they make me glad.
To let any starve would make me sad.
The deer and birds, they feed my soul.
How can any man hate humans so?

The price of care is always high.
But my Maker expects for me to try
To love all lives, to help them feast,
To keep them warm, for they're the least
Of those whom He did care to make.
I owe God that, it's for His sake.

All faith aside, Jack ought to see
That people and critters all need to feed.
If he were hungry, and cold and sick;
If he were harassed with no "bone to pick",
With folks who judge, with folks who roar,
He'd love some help from a good feed store.

Buddy Armour

Eternity

What happens when our bodies die?
Are spirits freed? Or do they lie
In coffins cold or sealed urns gold?
I'd like to know before I go.

Three schools of thought, my preacher said.
Some say you're done, that dead is dead.
That life just stops, no soul goes forth
No heaven, no hell, no future life force.

Some say we speed to the pearly gate,
No "rest", no "sleep", no need to wait.
We walk those streets of shiny gold.
We see the Lord and friends, I'm told.

Some say we queue in a deep-sleep state
For Christ's return via trumpet's wake.
Then we live out life forever in peace.
In a loving new world where hate will cease.

So what's the truth? Which end's for me?
As the years whisk by, it'd be nice to see
What God, in love, has in store for me,
How God, in love plans eternity.

Yet, the caveat here is I must have faith
In Him who rules past Heaven's gate.
No glimpse up front, no sneak peek for me,
Just trust in God that His son I'll see.

Buddy Armour

Three Score and Ten

Three score and ten, a weird year count
To let me know the days I've racked.
It sounds like a tally of runs or points
Instead of time I can't get back.

Our dear friend, Abe, first let me know
That such a term could frame the years
I've roamed this earth and tried to show
Some good that would help life ring clear.

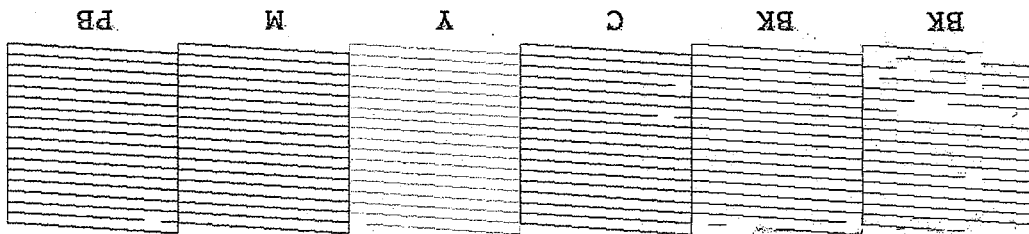
No guarantee of the days we'll last
Or how those days will end.
We only know what the Psalmist said:
The lucky live three score and ten.

Such length of time did seem quite long
When as a child I leaped and bent.
Now, such a span feels way too brief
As days melt swiftly toward that end.

But live the past, I cannot do,
Because my Maker demands I treasure
Not only the Good and Love and Truth,
But the Faith and Trust I cannot measure.

No guarantee of the days we'll last
Or how those days will end.
We only know what the Psalmist said:
The lucky live three score and ten.

Buddy Armour



When I Was Tall

At sixteen years, I was five feet, ten.
My hair was brown, my belly thin.
My goal that year was to play football
Back then when I was tall.

But 'ball was out, and my horn stayed in.
My folks had bought it when I was ten.
Yes, I did my best to please them all
Back then when I was tall.

My dad, a tippler, did all he could
To be the dad I thought he should.
But addiction helped him hit that Wall
Back then when I was tall.

My five-six dad did pass in time,
My mom passed, too, from Cancer's climb,
And Life moved on to my season of fall
No longer am I quite as tall.

At my age now, this old spine rules,
That mean stenosis is oh-so cruel.
Then came a call of scoliosis,
Another shortening diagnosis.

It's funny, I think, to track my life
By age, by health, by history's height.
I'd like to be no longer small
But big like back when I was tall.

Buddy Armour

Tiny Palls

I watch TV and all I see
Are grey little frames as their families flee
To find some help, to restore a life
Poured out at the hand of unending strife.

I hear their screams, I see their tears,
I watch the blood draining from their ears
As arms and legs dangle from their cores
Parents cry aloud as they crash through doors.

It hurts, I tell you. It hurts, I cry,
To see the tiny palls go by.
The lives now gone, no chance to play,
No chance to greet a brand-new day.

I feel their fear as their light goes dim,
As life flows out, as hope grows grim.
I pray that God restores that Light.
I pray that God will fix their plight.

I flip the channel, but the Death prevails.
The chaos reigns; loved ones still wail.
The blood streams out; the wars go on.
And babies die; all innocence gone.

It hurts, I tell you. It hurts, I cry,
To see the tiny palls go by.
The lives now gone, no chance to play,
No chance to greet a brand-new day.

Buddy Armour

In My Garden

Oh Lord, I lost a friend today,
You know, the one who loved You so.
I'm sure he's resting in Your care,
Now safe and well, Your mercy shown.

His suffering gone, his service done,
Your healing hands now shield his brow.
We miss him, Lord. The world feels bare.
How can we live in the here and now?

In my garden, the seed that dies
Awaits Your power to grow.
Teach me in my waning days
To live like my friend, Joe.

Joe's flower has wilted, his pedals gone,
But in Your hands, he dwells secure.
I hear his voice as he often asked,
"Are you okay?" His love so sure.

There never was need to ask friend Joe
"What can I ever do for you?"
'Cause Joe would say, "Just say and pray
That I gave our God His glory due.

In my garden, the seed that dies
Awaits Your power to grow.
Teach me in my waning days
To live like my friend, Joe.

Buddy Armour

Baby Dumplin'

In '33, my father did go
To a racy and raucous hoochie-coochie type show.
The show would be held in a big tent, you see
In a place South of town known to all as Gaffney.

The show star's name had been billed Baby Dumplin',
A busty old gal who was really quite somethin'.
Her bosoms she'd rotate first east and then west,
Then both would go "smack" when they hit center-chest.

The old men would howl when her orbs would collide.
She twirled and she danced, not a thing she did hide.
Then Pop and friend Bobby got pushed to the stage
When the bouncers soon noticed they were well-underage.

So, the chase now began, past the stage they both went.
The fifteen-year-olds then slipped under the tent.
They ran to their car, and they started it up.
The two sped away leaving huge plumes of dust.

My dad told this story at school the next day.
His pals had all gathered to hear tell of the fray,
Of how Dumplin' had danced and displayed all her charms
While two boys sneaked South without raising alarm.

"That's quite an adventure," I told my old dad.
"Dang right," he replied, "That gal weren't half-bad!"
So young lads really went to the Tent to the South, and
Baby Dumplin' did dance for that noisy road house!

Buddy Armour