

A Silly Poem for Bessie's Birthday

(In memory of Bessie Sorenson Lindgren
December 26, 1886 - March 31, 1986)

There once was a lady named Bessie
Who aspired to be very dressy.
A hat on her hair
Kept her face very fair
Her long braided coil never messy.

For 98 years it was always the same
When one happy day to a salon she came.
“Cut it like hers,” echoed loudly and clear.
Words Virgie had not expected to hear.
But Bessie was ready for new locks to tame.

Today was her *birth* day so very long ago.
On a farm she was born and would live there to grow
In Spring Valley Township her parents resided
Monona County's loess soil a bounty provided.
With her brothers and sister, she would learn, laugh, and sew.

A teacher was she in the local country school
Helping those farm kids succeed, as a rule
Until August 12, 1908,
When Emil kissed her, becoming her mate.
She then lived in Moorhead and could sit on a stool.

No teaching, no farmwork, just waiting for baby
Some cooking, some tatting, some canning maybe.
A walk to the store to see busy Lindgrens,
Help sister Anena find buttons in bins,
Plan dresses and hats with bows for a lady.

Virgie, the Belle of the Ball, soon joined in.
Eight years later the stork stopped again:
Anita Teresa was so very tiny
She slept in a drawer, her eyes bright and shiny.
Like sisters they were to Cousin Newell then.

Finally Bessie returned to the farm
With daughters to help her and hang on her arm.
She kept the chickens and helped milk the cows.
She gathered the apples, feeding some to the sows.
Long years she worked there and came to no harm.

Emil's small farm would thrive,
Keeping his little family alive,
Riding out the Depression,
The horses and tractors in quick succession,
But the truck accident he couldn't survive.

For nearly a century many changes Bessie saw.
Running water was added, no longer a haul.
Cars, telephones, radios, box cameras, and more.
She missed out on PC's and ring tones galore.
But many things now could be bought at the mall.

Space travel too was part of her news.
She passed up the chance to go on a cruise.
Imagine her parents' surprise if they knew
To San Diego to rescue Anena, she flew,
For "even cowgirls get the blues."

In Spencer she later escaped from the snow
But back to the farm in the spring she would go.
She favored the arts using fabric and thread,
Watercolors and oils, besides books she had read,
Especially the Bible, when not punching dough.

Crossword puzzles at her side,
She taught us to do them, her words a guide.
One time in her 90's she was very funny:
Told of an aged puzzler, also no dummy,
"Does she do them in ink?" Gram replied.

~~ Donna Dyhrkopp Clarke
December 26, 2008