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## Missed a Spot

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# When Did I Fall in Love With You?

Mary Baumgartner

Was it that early September day,  
When as we spent time by a quiet lake,  
You heard my call and came my way  
Your arms the drowning child to take?

Maybe it was at the end of that evening,  
When in your eyes I saw the longing  
To give your love to those around you,  
Until the loneliness would no more abound you?



MISSED A SPOT Jennifer Triggs

Or was it that time when I ceased crying,  
Because in the endless depth of your blue eyes,  
That day I found myself forever smiling,  
My heart so full of joy that it could touch the skies?

Perhaps it was the day I felt alone inside,  
And I could think of no one else but you.  
And when I found you by my side,  
My soul's search ended and I felt so new?

I know not when my love for you began.  
I know that I'll never find someone like you again.  
For it is God who joins soul to soul.  
And God is love by you I once was told.

# A Stray

Lisa Torcasso Downing

LEORA HOISTED HER SLACKS AT THE KNEE **AND DROPPED TO THE GROUND.**

With her bottom stuck straight up in the air, she peered under the shed and clucked, "Here, Kitty," then went still, not even breathing as her eyes darted back and forth, hunting for the stray that had attacked her for no good reason. Why, all Leora'd done was turn the hose to the tomatoes when out from under that shed jumped a black fur ball, making the most god-awful sound. From where I stood, it looked to nearly cause Leora — well, there ain't no polite way to say this — to nearly wet herself. I could've laughed 'til high noon, but I knew Leora wouldn't take kindly to that, so I kept right on picking myself some tomatoes from her garden while she grabbed Roy's old rake from inside the shed.

Now, Leora never was soft on inedible animals, especially strays, and I could see she had no intention of letting that little beast terrorize her garden. She fisted that rake and lowered herself so that her cheek set right in the dirt beside the shed. It was clear as anything that she meant that little homeless cat no good. Problem was, she couldn't make out exactly where under the shed the animal was hid. That shed was one of those assemble-yourself, aluminum contraptions — just the kind of thing Roy'd buy — but he didn't trouble to flatten the land before he screwed it together. Needless to say, it didn't set level. So Roy took himself a wheelbarrow and borrowed some bricks left over from the church addition. When he hoisted up the far side, he created a gloriously dark crawl space for critters in the family way and saddled Leora with her current strife.

It was dark as Hades under that shed and so was the cat. Though Leora made some valiant pokes under there with the rake handle, she just couldn't get a good smack on the thing, much less scare it off. One thing about Leora, she ain't easily discouraged. One thing about me? Well, I'm not stupid. I got my tomatoes, said my "thank-yous," and "va-moosed" out of there before she dragged me into her battle with that wild kitten.

The way Leora tells it, she'd been flat on her belly for more than an hour, fishing around like that for a solid hunk of cat, blindly chasing hissing sounds, and — I'm certain, though she ain't likely to admit it — cursing up a storm. All of a sudden, out of the blue, behind her she says she heard a fence plank groan.

So, she glanced back over the rake tines and found that little Winnie Fletcher had clambered up the back side of her fence and was standing on the cross board, staring down at her through eyes as round as store-bought onions.

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