

A Funny Story

I have probably turned the age of four and we are going on a trip to Vermont to visit an aunt and uncle. Also going with us is my grandmother and another aunt and uncle. I am very excited because we hardly ever go anywhere that isn't "necessary" because the price of gas is too high and everyone is busy working.

I have had an all over bath the night before so that we can get an early start the next morning. Mom has put a nice dress on me. It has smocking on the front, puff sleeves and peter pan collar. I also have black shoes with a strap and white socks with lace on them. Mom told me to sit on a chair on the porch and "Don't get dirty" while she got herself dressed. There really wasn't much to get dirty on. Two chairs, a table that we ate supper at in the summer and a cot that I sometimes took a nap on.

Today something new had been added under the cot and I just had to find out what it was. Way in the back was a blue coffee can with something in it and I had to take a look. So very carefully I pulled it out and inside were a couple paintbrushes and a liquid that smelled a little like mom's perfume. So I stuck my finger in it and put a little behind each ear and some on my wrist. A little bit got on the collar of my dress but it didn't show. I slid the can back under the cot and was getting back in my chair when mom called and said we were ready to go but as I ran up to her she grabbed my arm and said "What have you gotten in you stink!" Dad said "It smells like the turpentine I put the brushes in." Mom dragged me to the kitchen put some soap and water on the corner of a towel and started to scrub behind my ears so hard it brought tears to my eyes. Dad said "It's not that bad, come on we'll be late picking up the others."

When we got to town to pick the others up the first thing my grandmother said was "What stinks of turpentine?" So mom had to go into detail of what I had done and everyone rolled their eyes. We were finally on our way. Now in the thirties and forties there were no super highways. Just one road with a line down the middle, one side going south the other north and we were going north. Everyone was in a good mood. Dad and my uncle were reading the Burma shave signs and everyone laughed. I laughed too even though I didn't understand the joke, but I didn't want to be left out.

All of a sudden I had to pee and I told my mother. She said "Why didn't you go before we left?" I said I didn't have to but she said I would have had to hold it until we got there. I tried. I crossed my legs, thought about other things but nothing seemed to work. I said "Mom I have to pee I can't hold it!" So she told my dad to find a place to pull over because I had to pee and everyone rolled their eyes.

Dad finally pulled over next to a cow pasture and dad, mom and I got out of the car. I thought I would pee right beside the car but mom had other ideas. So dad held the fence of the pasture up while we went under it.

I don't know if you realize there are three kinds of cow patties and I think they were all in this cow pasture. The first kind is big, soupy and kind of black and greenish. The second ones are about the same only they are beginning to turn a little gray on the top from the sun and the third kind are baked in the sun for quite a while and have turned all gray and are like wood chips.

Mom and I started across the pasture toward a large pile of rocks with brush growing out of it and we went around the backside so that no one could see us. I couldn't even see the road. Mom helped me pull up my dress and pull down my panties and said "Be careful don't pee in your shoes." When I was done she helped me pull

everything up and down then she decided she had to go too. While she did her thing I stood and looked off into the distance at the very large farm and wondered where all the cows were and if there are any horses, dogs, cats or chickens.

Just about then something hit my shoulder and I jumped right into a cow patty of the second kind. It went up over my little black shoe and my white sock with the lace. It was my mother's hand on my shoulder that made me jump, guess I shouldn't have been daydreaming. She yelled "Judas Priest look what you did!" grabbed my upper arm and we flew across that cow pasture! I don't think my feet touched the ground once and it was probably a good thing as I might have stepped in a number one cow patty! When my mother uses the word Judas Priest I know she is very mad because she never says bad words and that is the baddest of the bad!

I guess everyone must have heard her because everyone was out of the car looking over the fence and dad was holding it up for us. As mom sat me on the running board my aunt asked what happened and mom said "She stepped in cow shit!" Oh boy I'm really in trouble, there is another bad word! Mom tried to get the cow poo from my shoe by rubbing it in the grass but it made it worse and my sock was beyond repair.

Dad got a rag from the trunk of the car and tried to help but now my shoe smelled like car grease AND cow poo, so everything went into the trunk! We all got back in the car and this time I had to sit in front between dad and my uncle. I couldn't see over the dashboard or out the side windows so I closed my eyes and took a nap. Before long my dad was waking me up saying that we were there and sure enough there were my aunt and uncle waiting for us on the porch. My aunt wanted to know what took us so long and everyone rolled their eyes and my nanny had to tell them the whole story.

Just about then my cousin came out of the house made a face and said I smelled bad and he wasn't going to play with me which was OK with me because we really didn't get along very good anyway. I don't remember much about the rest of the day. My cousin probably sat with his nose in a book and I probably sat on the couch and sulked. One thing I do remember is that I never went on a long trip again until I was almost a teenager.

Sunday, May 18, 2014

This has been one of the most terrible days of my 77 years. The people that owned the Mack property had the farm house burned down. The house was one of the first ones built in East Orford about 200 years ago by Tom Savage, and had sheltered three generations of Macks. My mother was a Mack and we lived there off and on until the 40's. That was the best place in the world to live and I knew every inch of the house from top to bottom. I knew the barn too and the shop on the top of the hill. The corn crib was my playhouse and the water that filled the tub for the cows was so cold it made your head hurt if you drank it. I knew the woods and fields and where you could get frog eggs in the spring and watch them hatch in a jar. Where the biggest blueberries were and a patch of wild strawberries that mom and I would pick and she would make strawberry shortcake for supper. I loved the farmhouse and land, but there came a time when I had to leave but I never forgot and thought of it often because it was the best of times for me. I knew that the house would always be there and of course the land to I was even going to have some of my ashes spread by the big rock in the back field where I used to spend a lot of time playing but not anymore. The house had a soul and the land had a soul. It being burned down, broke me and my daughters heart, and it can never be fixed.