

my notes tell me I transcribed this on 21 December 2010.
something told me it would vanish otherwise.
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20230313

Hardware Store

Family history and childhood memories exploring a large hardware store in a farming community. That's when I got hardware in my blood.

For three generations we've been hardware men
Self trained at first, I guess
Great-grandfather and his wife came here from Holland
Not usually what I think of as a hotbed of that trade
But then there's no mention either of tulips in my past

Perhaps he dealt in pumps and such, maybe windmill parts
Who knows, maybe he even built those things
Anyway, they arrived on Christmas Day of 1853
And settled finally in the good lands of west Missouri
In a place called Deutchtown, forever confusing Dutch with Deutsch

The farmers there, as everywhere, needed implements and tools
And things with which to build their new Eden, and a church
This was before the Civil War and roads of any quality at all
And before rails had crossed the great Missouri far to the east
So bringing in those heavy goods was quite the problem then

Six children arrived more easily
Though the wife may have disagreed
Three would die before maturity, a score average for the time
But two sons would survive to a ripe old age, Henry and John J.
And they had it in their blood, they too were hardware men

Only one big hardware store per town, I guess
Cause my grandfather, Henry, moved away
To Rosemont, all of 5 miles down a dirt road
But Rosemont was on the new line and would prosper
Deutchtown had been passed right by and would slumber

The brothers each build large stores, brick and concrete two stories high
With a pediment above to frame the name and, for Henry, 1909
Rings out front for tying up the horses, troughs too for the horse's thirst
The Deutchown brother branched into cornmeal milling and feed
And build fine cabinets on the side

The Rosemount side did blacksmithing and horse shoeing
And soon build wagons and carriages for the local trade
When the coal mines came they sold explosives of several types
But hardware was always there biggest thing
Hardware was in their blood

The empire of the Deutchtown side collapsed in one great fire
And what was to remain of that family side was lost to me forever
That probably was a major loss, but then I never knew them
That was many years before my time
And what remained ahead would more than compensate their loss

The Rosemont side survived and prospered
My grandmother, Henry's wife, brought him eight sons and a daughter
The first three sons were to have hardware in their blood
They expanded the business to find work enough for all
They added the newest electric appliances and coffins for the dead

There was little left for the daughter and the younger sons
So the daughter married well
And the younger sons received the better education
They all left for professions in the big cities
My father, the youngest, became a dentist, hardware blood gone for sure

I don't know when the shelves were built in the Rosemont store
They set upon low cabinets below, with drawers for smaller stuff
And in an open array reached nearly to the ceiling,
How high they might have been I can't say for sure, maybe 12 feet or so
For the ceiling was probably 16 feet, enough to have a half-floor in the back

The shelves ran horizontal nearly the full depth of the store, maybe 50 feet
So if the shelves were vertically one foot apart
And eight in number
There must have been a total of 400 feet
That's more than 100 yards of shelving, and that's a lot

In front of all the shelving was a ladder
It hooked to a rail at top by wheels is such a way it wouldn't fall
And rolled along the concrete floor on a second set
The ladder was very steep but was provided with handrails on both sides
That gave me a sense of security, false perhaps, though I never fell

There must have been a thousand things displayed upon those shelves
Boxes mostly, but with pictures showing what's inside
Hooks for screen doors, tacks to hold the screen, screen door handles too
They were all there in a section just for them
Screws and bolts and nuts and washers in another larger place

Things more important to daily life were found on the lower shelves
Wicks for lamps were still in need, and there were light bulbs of many kinds
Nails too, smaller for common use, great spikes for when you need them
Everything you'd ever need in the line of hardware
I touched every one of them, and soon got hardware in my blood

There were things I especially liked
Glass chimneys for the oil lamps, plain to fancy, in a selection of colors
Rat traps and awful spiked things for killing moles tunneling in your yard
Ammunition of many types for guns displayed nearby
And woodworking tools, of course, oh they were my greatest love

Now these tools were of farmer's grade, good and durable but not the best
Though until much later, I would not have known the difference
The chisels seemed sharp enough to me to cut my finger, if not wood
Hand planes of several sizes, small for bench use to extra long for doors
Saws too of many types, rip and crosscut almost three feet long

Elsewhere were the tools for working metal
Hack saws, both fine and course, cold chisels and punches
Taps and dies for bolts and nuts, larger ones for steel pipe
Levels and plumb bobs, the latter of shiny brass with sharp steel tips
There was even a surveyor's spirit level and tripod in a special case

Many tools were in between, more general in their use
Hammers with claws or peens, each in several weights
Sledge hammers, short handled and long, also of different weights
Crow bars, pry bars, long bars with wedge ends for moving heavy objects
Pliers and tongs, screw drivers straight and Phillips

Most every tool I would ever see I saw first upon those shelves
And that's true too of general hardware small and light enough to fit
The bigger stuff was elsewhere, in metal bins or laid upon the floor
Bolts for the mining machinery, thick as my arm, nuts bigger than my fist
Chain whose links could serve as bracelets, sometimes larger

Too many things to list, every one a sheer delight to see
And, if I was strong enough, hold in my two now dirty hands
I never even tried to count them all, it was best to never know
But each one had soaked into my dirty hands
And, slowly, the hardware in my blood grew thicker

The older sons worked with Henry until he died, then followed in his place,
By then they embalmed the bodies for which they sold the coffins
One brother, so I'm told, was blinded by the fluid
He moved to Phoenix for his health and lived there in an orange grove
They all died in due course, as did, eventually, the store itself

There was an auction some years later, everything of value would be sold
All the hardware stock would go, and all the fixtures too
But by the time I'd heard, everything was gone, the building just a shell
The shelves had been disassembled, where they went I've never known
I might have bought them, but what for, the hardware's in my blood

<http://authspot.com/poetry/hardware-store/>
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Read more: <http://authspot.com/poetry/hardware-store/#ixzz18lmgVD8t>

Troost Avenue

Born in 1940 on Troost Avenue, Kansas City. Maybe too much education, 32 years worth. M.D., Ph.D. and other fancy stuff. Pathologist and medical researcher with lots of technical publications, none of which are the least bit poetic. Loved science more than making money, in retrospect maybe not the best idea, but you do have to pay for happiness some times. Got cancer, decided life was too short, retired early to become the artist I was intended to be. Cancer cured. Faithful and loving to first wife for 43 years now; poetic regrets are artistic license (but must come from somewhere). Chronic depression till advent of good medications. Bad, bad stuff. Four kids, only one still living. Worse bad stuff. Accomplished woodworker. Fair with oil paints. Found poetry in mid '09 while down flat with back injury. Two young granddaughters. Life is good.

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described at

<https://jmcvey.net/hdwe/poetry/index.htm#troost-avenue>

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