

The Grayson Family

Christmas Poems

1966 - 1991

**Collected and Published by Richard Grayson, Dan Grayson,
Kristi Grayson Hestilow, Rebecca Grayson Jaxon,
and Janelle Grayson Ream – 1993**



*Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand.*

Be Kind, Tender-hearted, forgiving others, as God forgives you.

Colossians 3:13

TO MY FAMILY

When I was a little girl, it was such a thrill to sleep over at Grandpa Kinne's farm. Mom and Aunt Johanna would sometimes make up beds for us in the living room with the big black horsehair sofas, the old Victrola, and the walnut pump organ.

But what I always thought was absolutely the most beautiful thing I had ever seen was a religious motto hung up over the door directly within my line of sight. Ornatly Victorian, it was made of deep red plush with lots of colored flowers and curliques and it said:

Be Ye Kind, Tenderhearted, Forgiving Others, As God Forgives You.

It was burned into my unconscious mind and I have never forgotten it. I used to think it was much too simple to mean much, theologically, though.

But much later, I read of the life of Christ: how much of his life was just spent being kind to people - day to day loving behavior to all the world's little people.

Now I have learned, regretfully, that there is sometimes not much we can do for all the people we meet as they work out their earthly destinies. But at least we can be kind to them. We might be the only ones that are.

I hope that you will hang these little mottos where your children can grow up to remember the words, too. Maybe we can start our own epidemic of kindness.

Love, MOM

Christmas, 1985

Letter to June Grayson from Dick Grayson

June, 1993:

*On the occasions of your 68th birthday and our 44th wedding anniversary.
(June 1st and June 2nd.)*

June, there are many things I should have said to you during your lifetime and particularly at the last. But now that I have had 19 months of weeping over your death, I realize I should tell you these things. I hope you can read this letter somehow, but if not, I will tell you when we meet again. Meanwhile, this letter might encourage our children to be more articulate toward those they love.

These are then the memories of you that I should have told you I appreciated: Your constant praise of everyone, in particular, of me and the kids; you always read inspirational books at bedtime on the power of praise to make people happy and to make them better.

Your praises, many times unrequited, always spontaneous and for no ulterior motive, made all of us better. I miss calling you on the radio and later on the cellular phone to tell you I was on the way home; to you it was the signal to do that old-fashioned thing that now has gone the way of the feminists, to get the supper ready. We had an agreement, you and I: we divided the tasks between yours and mine; you did what you liked, I did what I liked and it all was done. It wasn't a matter of Chauvinism, it was a matter of preference as to what chores we did. And if something wasn't finished, we generally did not complain.

I remember many's the time you told me you appreciated that I never complained about the unkempt house because other things were more important. Remember the sign you put on the door to your room: "This is my mess, so keep out." I miss you kissing me anytime and anywhere just for the fun of it and how I often said at the office in front of the nurses that they were looking, which was what you wanted. I'm glad you did that so they know even now that we loved each other. I would give anything I have to kiss you again.

I miss you. I miss you. I love you. -- Dick

*I Am With You Always!
To Those I Love and Those Who Love Me
When I am gone, release me, let me go,
I have so many things to see and do.
You musn't tie yourself to me with tears.
Be happy that we had so many years.*

*I gave you my love, you can only guess,
How much you gave to me in happiness.
I thank you for the love you each have shown,
but now it's time I traveled on alone.*

*So grieve a while for me if grieve you must,
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part,
so bless the memories within our heart.*

*I won't be far away, for life goes on.
So if you need me, call and I will come.
Thyh you can't see or touch me, I'll be near.
And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear
all of my love around you soft and clear.*

*And then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile and "welcome home".*

-- Author unknown

Christmas 1966

Now comes the family of Richard R. Grayson
To wish Merry Christmas to our friends round the nation.
And ask God to bless you this coming New Year
With peace, health, and happiness — and nothing to fear.

We've all grown older and a little bit smarter (?),
But now for some news — how's this for a starter.

Number one son, our Daniel, is almost fifteen,
Over six feet already, and at wrestling he's keen.
He plays first chair trombone in the Junior High band,
And studies the stars in Chicagoland.
There's only one thing that he needs, I assume,
The newest computer for his very own room.

Our Kristi was thirteen this month — a great date:
She's constantly combing her curly hair straight.
In between times she digs the clarinet and the piano,
Studies hard, and helps Mother, and oh:
I could go on forever saying nice things about her,
But suffice it to say that we couldn't live without her.

Rebecca is ten — dreamer, writer, and actress,
Organizer too — have you heard of the C.A.T.S.?
“Civilian Association of Terrifying Spies” — that's her in-group or something.
With the neighbor boys called the “Wildcats” — that is better than nothing.
Her forte is the piano and a hot cornet too
And she studies gymnastics for something to do.

And then there's Janellie: Oh, how can I say it:
Well, we've managed so far — just perhaps we will make it.
The “almost-fours” show improvement over the “terrible twos”,
And if you look at it that way, why, we have nothing to lose.
But she's Daddy's big, beautiful, long-haired, blonde charmer,
And when she kisses and hugs him he'll let no one harm her.
Now don't misunderstand — we love and adore her,
But none of us are as young as we were just before her.

Then there's Princess the Second, our five month old Shepherd,

And Fudgie, our Siamese, who thinks she's a leopard.
And Fireball, her lithe, sinewy son,
And the three new little kittens — for sale to anyone.

Poor Richard says please don't embarrass him so
By sending such a bad poem to everyone we know.
So I guess I can't tell you he's as handsome as ever
And the continuing center of my every endeavor.
He's busy just now preparing his speech
On the future of medicine that's just beyond reach,
While the snows of December bring a welcome surcease
To my duties as gardener of roses and trees.

So now you all know what I knew at the start —
It's easy to tell me and Shakespeare apart.
But please keep on sending your news now and then
And pictures of loved ones we knew "way back when".
And please come to visit our present abode
The little red house at the end of the road.

Dick and June Grayson 1966



Christmas 1967

The choirs of Christmas remind us again
God's love still surrounds us on earth as in heaven.
As the worries and cares of this year fade away
May He still be your comfort, your strength, and your stay.

This family of six Graysons gives thanks for a year
Filled with blessings of health, good friendship, and cheer.

Daniel Richard, our son, one and only, fifteen,
Is tall, blonde, and handsome, muscular, lean.
He likes math, science, chess club, his trombone, and Pep Band.
He's a senior so has applied to colleges all over the land.
It's easy to tell - takes almost no intuition
That his goal is to be a mathematician.
He's an Astro-Science scholarship winner
But we still can't afford to feed him at dinner.

Our fourteen year old Kristi likes new clothes and school dances
And practices hours at the piano on Schubert's Romances.
She plays first clarinet in the Junior High Band
And will be a nurse, which we think is just grand.
She has lots of friends and is very efficient -
I can't think of anything in which she's deficient.
(It's my honest opinion - though I hate to admit it
That our teenagers feel we're no longer quite with it.)

Our own little Twiggy, Rebecca, eleven,
As a sixth grader really is in seventh heaven.
She wants to be a vet and restrict her practice to felines.
To her tender heart all animals have direct beelines.
She looks like her daddy with big brown eyes and dark hair.
She likes acrobatics and plays the trumpet with flair.

Now "almost five" is a wonderful age.
Janelle has reached a bearable stage.
Of course she still screams and giggles and teases the kittens,
Dumps her toys all around and loses her mittens.
But when she sings "God loves me dearly" we know
That all children are angels to enjoy here below.

As for me, every year my intentions are good
But it seems that I never do all that I should.

I help at the office. And to think that when I was a student
We girls thought there would soon be more nurses than prudent.
There is Church Women's Guild and LWV for something to do,
Gardening just for fun and bridge club too.

But the star of our story, the head of this clan,
Is that same sweet wonderful man,
The only family we had as a starter
That began eighteen years ago with that old marriage charter.
He goes to the office, the hospital, the Boys' School,
And in between times comes home to pronounce the latest rule.
There's time for Civil Defense, radios, handball, his writing,
Child training, dog training, – oh, life is always exciting:

But for us in this new year, the most rewarding diversion
Would be to hear all about you, or to see you in person.

Dick and June Grayson

Christmas 1968

Can it be Christmas already? The calendar says so!
I knew it was coming eventually, I guess -- though
Somehow the days seem to go much too fast,
The hopes and the fears of each year soon are past.
But some '68 highlights we'll try to recall
To greet you at Christmas. God bless you all.

In January our dog Princess died of lead encephalopathy --
She ate her white picket fence to produce this pathology.
So we had to start in with a puppy again;
Hunter, the black labrador, now roams the dogpen.
In the spring we all tried to help Danny decide
Which of the schools in this whole country wide
Would have a mathematics department of renown.
He chose the University of Chicago, only forty miles from our town.
In May I entered the hospital for a right stapedectomy.
Thank goodness I can hear again when someone talks to me!
Let me commend this procedure to you if you need it;
It's worth my advice -- if only you'll heed it.

In June we attended Dan's high school graduation.
Then he found summer work at DuKane Corporation
In the computer department. Wouldn't you know it!
He worked very hard and had paychecks to show it.
Becky chose a week at Walcamp for her summer vacation.
Summer music camp in Wisconsin was Kris' destination.
She worked the rest of the summer at Pottawatomie Pool
As a water safety aide in their big swimming school.
In August we drove to Iowa all together
To visit family and friends in the best kind of weather.

In September our "baby" began kindergarten.
Janelle is grown up now and smart, and
The only one who can still sit on my lap
For a story, or comforting, or a rare little nap.
Our big girls both attend Haines Junior High.
Kris is a "candy striper" in the Delnor Hospital Auxiliary.
Becky studies German and plays her own folk guitar.
And Janelle plans to be a trampoline star.
While Dan calls Mead Hall his new home
Right across from the Midway
(where the Blackstone Rangers roam).
In November life became even more hectic!

Becky tried to hatch chicken eggs by methods eclectic!
While Dick's allergies finally demanded attention
And we had to conclude the best cure was prevention.
The words he pronounced on that terrible day
Were "The three cats have to go -- just take them away !"
So if you want to adopt a Siamese cat
Please call us at once and we'll arrange everything stat.

But for our own Devil's Advocate and this one family's Rock of Gibraltar
I would like to sing praises with harp and with psalter.
He works every day and sometimes most of the night
Taking care of his patients with all of his might.
There's Rotary Club, writing, radios, and the YMCA
For a fast game of handball to keep in shape that way.
And off and on every day with all of our problems we've harried him
So I can tell you most truthfully we're all glad we married him.

Ages have passed since that first Christmas day.
Yet throughout much of the world evil still seems to hold sway.
God give us the strength the coming year through
To do all the work He has sent us to do.

Dick and June Grayson

Christmas, 1969

We ask your indulgence again with our rhyme
As we greet you at Christmas in the year '69
To share news of our family throughout the past year
And ask God to bless you and all those you hold dear.

Our only, beloved, seventeen year old son,
Dan, a sophomore, we still think second to none.
The U. of Chicago is the greatest, he'll vow,
But we miss him at home, as you all will allow.
He studies African civ, chemistry, the logic of math,
And ring theory of algebra — a math degree path.
He works part time each week at Union Carbide Corporation
As a computer programmer. Listen, it helps pay that tuition!
It was the night before the October Moratorium Day
That the police stopped his car and took him away.
The charge? No license to drive, he'd lost his billfold at first,
But we say his long hair made the police think the worst.

So he spent thirty minutes in a Chicago neighborhood jail
While his two friends returned to the dorm to raise bail.
He said the experience was pleasant and the police were polite
So why did we worry — everything turned out all right!

Kris, now sixteen and increasingly dear,
Will almost admit she has had a good year.
She made the cheerleading squad, won the lead in a play,
And flew down to Texas to visit cousins and play.
Summer music camp took two weeks, but she still somehow agreed
To work at the pool and teach swimming as needed.
But since I don't want you to think she is always the finest,
I'll tell you a secret — one grade this semester fell down to A-MINUS.
She went on a bus tour, called Chicago Urban Exposure, during Thanksgiving vacation
And saw at first hand some problems and attempted solutions of our nation.
And though she returned home emotionally spent
She could still ask us, "Why not make our high school education relevant?
Our nation is burning — these grave problems need attention.
Does anyone here know or care? No class even makes mention!"
And so we're reminded God's work is not done.
Where is peace on this earth and the victory won?

Becky, thirteen, now charms one and all.
She suddenly grew up - dark, slender, and tall.
Last spring she insisted on breeding some mice
In her bedroom in cages - the smell was NOT nice!
How she could sleep with the incessant chatter
Of twenty-nine mice was another small matter!
But she loved them all dearly and called them by name
And sold them under duress when vacation time came.
Then she flew to St. Louis to visit Beth Johnson
And next saw Mary Lou Warren in Wisconsin.
Now horse-riding lessons are her one greatest joy
Which she pays for herself by means of employ-
ment with sitting of babies and housework and such.
The work is quite easy but the pay is not much.
So I don't think that this year she'll ever be able
To save enough for summer camp with horses and stable.

Janelle, almost seven, says she's a baby no longer
Because she's grown tall and is smarter and stronger.
Those six missing baby teeth make her sweet smile slightly lopsided
And she thinks I should be ready for Christmas on TIME, she's confided.
She especially misses her big brother, Dan, when he's away at his college
So she telephones him daily to impart all family knowledge.

This almost precipitated a new crisis financial
Till we signed up for Callpak. (This is not a commercial!)
When she started first grade this fall she cried every day in frustration
As she discovered the rigors of elementary education.
She sobbed, "Cut and paste, cut and paste, - why, I'm tired of that!
I thought I'd learn how to read "The Cat in the Hat!"

But tears turned to smiles before very long
Because at last she can read - story, poem, or song.
The same thing with piano - after four lessons she wailed in dismay,
"Why doesn't it sound the way my big sisters play?"
So it is not always easy being the littlest one
Because the others are grown up and her work's just begun.

Now let us sing praises to my own lord and master,
A man who can cope with almost any disaster
That a wife and four children can think of to mention
At the end of the day when his patients need no more attention.
Dick said I should tell you that a busy medical practice in a 12-room office can be lucrative
To the landlord, banker, attorney, four nurses, family, and Uncle Sam,
that other destitute relative.

(I'm afraid that this means he has reached his tolerance
Of his budgeted daily one dollar allowance).
Still, he found time for fun this year in his spare time selection
Of his one-hundred-piece antique radio collection.
I swear those things multiply at night when we sleep
Because they've filled all the shelves and the floor three feet deep,
Though it probably is only fair to confess
That my antique dolls take up some room, too, I guess.
For additional ways to dissipate time,
I help at the office, keep the children in line,
Sometimes play the organ for church, work with Delnor Auxiliary,
Keep the house clean (?), and do other things ancillary.

I'm tired of rhyming — and so to our friends near and far —
God bless you and keep you wherever you are.

Dick and June Grayson 1969

Christmas, 1970

We've already missed Christmas, says the United States Postoffice head,
And the printer is awaiting my last minute arrival with dread.
But I've looked through all our library books in despair
To find something worthwhile to plagiarize there.
I guess there are no other great poets like me
Who use iambic pentameter so consistently.
Though I'm thinking great thoughts, I can't seem to get them on paper,
So I'll just have to continue my usual seasonal caper.

Dan is eighteen, six foot three, and a junior in college
At the University of Chicago, that fount of knowledge.
He made the Dean's list last year (in spite of African Civilization)
And now studies topology, algebra, physics, and computer science information.
He's still a programmer part time, he corresponds with his draft board.
And brings lots of friends home to dinner in the little old red Ford.

Kris was a summer lifeguard at Pottawatomie Pool,
Is now seventeen, five foot six, and a junior in high school.
At Jo Anne's School of Modeling she gained additional skills
To employ in anticipation of all those big college bills.
Now she hopefully plans her next summer's trip to Peru
As a Wycliffe volunteer with Pastor Doug Deming and Sue.

Becky, fourteen, looks at the world through rose-colored glasses
Since she made wrestling cheerleading squad in the junior high classes.
Every spare minute she is sure to be found
Practicing handsprings and toe touches all over the ground.
She also likes Up With People — it's singing they do —
Trumpet, piano, band, wind ensemble, and accompanying other soloists, too.

Janelle, seven, is busy with tumbling, piano, Brownies, and dancing.
I know you'll forgive us as parents to think her entrancing.
Her big thrill of the year — which she yearns to repeat —
Was as flower girl in a brown velvet dress who looked mighty sweet
At Aunt Priscilla and Uncle Roger's wedding this fall
With cousin Johnny as ring bearer — they had a ball!
So if you need a beautiful blond flower girl to take part in your wedding
Janelle has dress and will travel, and don't think I'm just kidding.

(Where did they come from, these four interesting people -- they weren't here, you know,
When Dick and I met and were married twenty-one years ago.)

Now I hope you'll be able to bear the sad news I am soon to disclose:
Our hero, the-world's-greatest-athlete-in-training, will no longer pose
Such a serious threat to Joe Namath or Mohammed Ali
Because this year's athletic injuries brought intimations of mortality.
When a collision at handball resulted in a partial subluxation
Of the lens of the right eye he wailed in vexation.
To be told to lie flat on his back for a week
Is not the advice he would willingly seek!
Since he's almost recovered, you need no longer commiserate
So the rest of the year's highlights I'll now try to enumerate.

Dick was subpoenaed last April in Judge Parsons' Chicago Federal Court
As an expert medical witness concerning his original research and report
About one hundred air traffic controllers choleric
Who were the participants in a dyspeptic epidemic.

This interesting experience -- I almost hesitate to mention --
Reminded him how much he enjoys a performer's attention.
And now he's decided that when he comes back again
He might be a famous actor or even a comedian.
So the rest of this year he's enjoyed giving speeches satirical
On a wide range of subjects both scientific and empirical.

In October, Dick finally agreed to a family excursion.
(I admit the kids and I had to use considerable coercion).
Then we drove south to Sanibel Island in Florida
Where we all thought the sand, beach, and shelling adorable.
Except for our hero -- who thinks that all anyone needs
Is a cabin in Wisconsin surrounded by snowdrifts and trees.

Praise to the Lord, who still through all things maintains us,
With good health, loving family, and friends still sustains us.
Please write soon -- we'll be eagerly waiting to hear!
Merry Christmas, and God keep you through a Happy New Year.

Dick and June Grayson 1970

Christmas, 1971

C is for Christmas, carols, children, and candy.
If I could finish this poem, things would be dandy.
But no Christmas would be the Christmas we love
Without sending best wishes to friends we're fondest of.
So we'll now reminisce for six verses or so
Before assigning 1971 to the long, long ago.

Dan is nineteen, and, whether we like it or not,
Calls the U. of Chicago his "home" but we still miss him a lot.
Especially when, as he told us today,
It took twenty squad cars to chase two armed robbers away
That ran through his dormitory, Mead Hall,
And were finally entrapped in a dorm shower stall.
He's still on the Dean's list, I don't understand how,
When he takes courses he can't even explain to me now.
By name they are Ring Theory, Hamiltonian Formulations,
Algebraic Topology, and Measure and Interpretations.
"Just call it math, math, math, and physics," he says with a smile,
He knows mathematical concepts are not really my style.
Dick has offered big bribes to anyone who'd dare
Cut off Dan's luxurious, shoulder-length hair.
But Dan's six foot three, one hundred eighty pounds stubborn and strong,
So I guess he'll continue to wear his curly hair long.

Kris, just eighteen, is filling out a job application
For work on the waterfront of any camp in the nation.
She passed the ARC course in Water Safety Instruction last June
And hopes to arrange her next summer's employment real soon.
She's an Illinois State Scholar, a senior at Mount St. Mary,
And helps part time at Dick's office - clerical work, temporary.
She plans to attend St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, next fall
And I know she is eager to try out her wings away from us all.

But the most exciting experience of her whole life through
Must be the eight weeks this summer she spent in Peru
As a guest volunteer of the Wycliffe Bible Translators
In the Amazon jungles with monkeys and alligators.
She accompanied a linguist to visit a primitive Indian tribe
With no written language. Then the linguist tried to transcribe
The spoken word into writing - to obey God's command
To carry His Promises into every far land.
She flew many miles with "Uncle Doug" and "Aunt Sue"
And visited Lima, Cuzco, and Machu Pichu.

It's a very dangerous environment there at the base to be sure -
All those handsome young men and motorcycle rides to endure!

For Becky, now fifteen, I thought that this might be the year
New interests would replace her assorted animals so dear.
But this spring she raised a baby raccoon in her room -
A rewarding experience, except for the barnyard perfume.
And Cricket, the last survivor of her twenty-nine mice,
Died of a slow-growing tumor, a not unexpected demise.
Then she spent her own money to buy Mr. Glesne's old wire fence
So we could get Bonnie, the Great Dane, now here in residence.
This summer she passed her senior life saving examination
And then flew to Texas to see cousins on vacation.

Happiness was making the gymnastic team last spring for our city.
Gloom is taking time out because of torn hamstring muscles bilaterally.
But her new job at Rex's Drive-In demands her attention.
Her joy in her work is beyond all comprehension.
She takes orders and hopes to learn to cook and to clerk
And then has to empty thirteen wastebaskets each night before leaving work.
I said to her, "Becky, how can this be!
You never empty any wastebaskets for me!"
"You just don't understand, Mother," (I've heard THAT before),
"We're putting on a restaurant - that's not a chore!"

Janelle is now eight and is still our delight,
(Though the big girls don't think she does anything right).
She promises to hug us and kiss us until she's thirteen
And then says she'll be old enough to start being MEAN.
She has Brownies, gymnastics, choir, piano lessons,
And plans to make some of her own Christmas presents.
She has so many pets to attend to there's no time to sit
And so much new schoolwork she often cries, "I quit!"

Her current experience in math and biology
Is that male and female rabbits in the same hutch do multiply.
Those new baby rabbits just kept coming this fall
Until we almost decided we had to get rid of them all.
"I only want a good home for the babies, I can't let them perish,"
She sobbed. And then Kevin adopted four rabbits to cherish.
She still has the rabbits Mindy, Licorice, the baby, and Lou,
Guinea pigs Scotty and Sarah, nine fish, and 1/3 interest in Bonnie, too.

Kris and I drove to Iowa late in May
So I could be in Des Moines on the very day

That the Iowa Lutheran Hospital 1946 nursing class,
For their 25th anniversary, attended the alumnae banquet enmasse.
We all looked a little bit older, I guess,
But we can't let things like that cause distress.
Then we visited Iowa relatives and went especially to see
Grandpa Kinne's farm — that holds so many happy memories for me.
The farm has been sold and all of the buildings are slated
To be burned or plowed under, as tax reasons dictated.

As for Richard R. Grayson, Our Mighty Warrior, he's
Been busy as usual stamping out dread disease
And has joined with many other doctors of similar persuasion
To form the American Academy of Air Traffic Control Medicine.
They publish The Examiner and seek to investigate stress
That causes the human body in many ways to call S.O.S.
This summer he built a new patio, singly,
Out of redwood and bricks — it's a beauty!
And someone has to keep all these daughters in line
And no one's as conscientious as this dear husband of mine.
He even rigged up a new beam for his ham radio
So he could call Kris every day in Yarinacocha.

The scene that you see on the front of this card
Will give you an idea of our very newest "front yard"
That looks to the lakefront through birch trees and pine
Where lots of wild animals live all the time.
We call it "The Living End" or "Grayson's Retreat"
And it's far, far away from any well-traveled street.
It's wild land in Wisconsin and it's what we like best
And we hope to drive up there whenever we need to find rest.
We have our own Counter Culture and so it's back to the land
For vacation, farming, or gardening firsthand.
We'll confront Nature in cooperative communion
And when we're independent, we secede from the Union.
There's so much we want to accomplish that we run out of time
And I can't even decide how to finish this rhyme

Except to wish you and all those you hold dear
A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

Dick and June Grayson

Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything that I need.

He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams.

He restores my failing health and helps me do what honors Him the most.

Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for He is close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.

He provides delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. He has welcomed me as His guest and blessings overflow.

His goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with Him forever in His home.

The 23rd Psalm - The Living Bible

Christmas 1972

Oh, come all ye people, it's Christmas once more
And we're here to bring greetings right to your door
Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season.
May all your wishes come true (at least those within reason).

Dan is now twenty and lives far, far away
So we hardly see him at all, I am sorry to say.
He graduated (BS-MS) from the University of Chicago last June
In beautiful Rockefeller Chapel on a Saturday noon.
We all were a little bit proud, you can bet,
So Dan's long, curly hair hardly made Dick upset.
He flew to Charlottesville, Virginia, for the rest of the summer
To work at the Greenbank National Radio Observatory as a programmer.
With three other employees he found an apartment for the looking
And lost ten pounds by August since they all took turns cooking.
He wrote Dick in great detail about non-linear capacitors,
Parametric amplifiers, and interferometers.
(What this all means I am sure I can't say —
When I grew up with my sisters we never said things this way!)
He's a teaching assistant at M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass., since September
And works towards his doctorate — in mathematics, remember?

Kris is nineteen and a freshman at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.
I am afraid she doesn't miss us even one little iota.
Last January as a Mount St. Mary Senior she was chosen to be
A participant in the Presidential Classroom for Young Americans in Washington, D.C.
She saw our government in action, met our representatives,
and studied lots of books and big charts,
And attended a banquet and program at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.
The first week in June she gave her speech as the class Valedictorian
And the next day drove off for summer school chauffeured by Drew Ridge and Brother Dan.
Alas, when her money ran out, she had to come home and start work.
(This doctor we live with won't let any of us shirk).
Then in August we all drove back to St. Olaf once more
And all kissed her good-bye at her dormitory door.
She said in her last letter home (she must have been freezing, I fear),
"I need heavier clothes and more blankets - it's darn cold up here!"

Becky is sixteen and now thinks life is really enjoyable
Since big brother and sister are no longer around to annoy her.
She's top dog at last and don't think that's not better than being
Number three of the siblings - she says in NO way is THAT keen!
She's vice-president of her Spanish Club and co-captain of gymnastic team

And practices weekly on the bars, floor, vault, and beam.
She plans to study nursing when she is ready for college
And then be a navy nurse and use all that knowledge
To care for the sick on land and on sea
And travel all over the world, of course, incidentally.

Now she plays trumpet and piano and works as an aide
Part time each week at Dick's office - she even gets paid!

But her main goal of the year, you better believe it,
Was to get her drivers' license - and now she's achieved it!
As for Janelle, almost ten, how richly we're blest
To have one child left at home when the others leave the nest.
She practices daily on the piano and her Troubadour Harp.
The hard part is tuning: is this string too flat or too sharp?
She likes to play songs and the scales to and fro
But she says those other dumb exercises have just got to go.

She has Bonnie, our Great Dane, two guinea pigs, and four rabbits.
Their daily care surely develops responsible habits.
There were tears today as Hiccups, her two-year-old goldfish, expired.
She's so conscientious - he must have been just too old or too tired.
She likes gymnastics, seeing Giselle and Cousins Kristi and Lisa at the lake,
Girl Scouts, Junior Choir, visiting relatives, and presents of candles to make.
Last summer she went to the Y camp for two weeks with Tina Levine,
Made new friends, learned to swim, almost froze, and now hopes to go there again.

Our Man of the Year and to all of us still Number One
Keeps plugging along every day and gets lots of work done
At home or the office or the A.A.A.T.C.M.*
(God bless him and keep him, we need him Amen).
The Academy held its first Seminar on Stress in June of this year
And many doctors attended the meeting from far and from near
To hear the Great Men of Medicine talk all about stress
With full coverage by television, radio, and press.
Dick says to his patients, and even to me, too,
"You've got to slow down - all this stress is getting to you."
I said, "I've given the matter considerable thought
And have finally decided to do as I ought
And cut out all my working - I find it interferes with my pleasures."
"Wait a minute," said Richard, "those are not exactly the measures
I had in mind for you. You listen to me:
Just take care of the home, the office, the children, and me."

And wait until I tell you about my new competition:
It's Ethel, the 5,000 Watt Generator, now racing in four cylinder condition.
If we'd gone out and just bought a new one we'd be money ahead,
But, no, he had to resurrect a war surplus one from the dead!
"You can talk all you want to," said Richard, "but just wait and you'll see
When all those power failures come you'll be grateful to Ethel and me!"

Dear Husband just said, "We'll go to the lake during Christmas vacation."
(Do you think I responded with unbounded elation?)
I said, "You can't be serious, our lake has six feet of snow and fresh ice!"
"What do you mean," bellowed Richard, "why, the weather's just getting nice!"
So we plan to drive up there come sunshine or snow
And if we're lucky we'll warm up the trailer to twenty below.

I'm really just teasing, because on one thing we always agree:
In our woods on a lake in Wisconsin is the best place to be.
Have you heard the mating call of the ruffed grouse at early dawn in the spring?
Sounds like a jet engine revving up right next door before taking wing!
Or surprised the wild deer bounding away through the forest?
Or slept under canvas to awaken to the birds' magnificent chorus?
Or seen the sun set behind miles of water shimmering and still?
Or stared into the campfire burning down to coals until the night breezes chill?
And in October (I kid you not) - to hear the loudest noise there at all
You just sit under the trees and listen to all the leaves fall!

Life has its ups and its downs - guess that's the sum of our story.
But it's a beautiful world! To God alone be the glory!

Dick and June Grayson

*American Academy of Air Traffic Control Medicine



Grayson's Retreat

Christmas, 1973

Again comes the family of Richard R. Grayson
To gather at Christmas for a big celebration.

If the airplanes keep flying, Dan, 21, comes home soon
From Cambridge, Massachusetts, on the Friday afternoon
Before Christmas; we'll be so glad to see him again
And hear all about his work, studies, and friends.
Dan passed the exam for admission to the doctorate program last May
And now studies, teaches, and reads all about math every day.
He plans to start on his thesis and earn his Ph.D. in one year or two,
And after that who knows what kind of work he will do.
For now, he's a self-supporting M.I.T. teaching assistant
In Algebraic Geometry - I didn't even know this existed.
For more spending money, don't you agree this is most laudatory,
He's the substitute desk clerk at the girls' dormitory.

Kris, 20, will come home from St. Olaf College for a short stay
Before flying to Mexico City on New Year's Eve Day
To spend the sophomore year second semester
Studying the language and culture of Latin America.
"Why don't you run off and get married," Dick always cries in despair,
"Instead of planning more ways to spend your life up in the air!"
But Kris has this global butterfly fever,
And we can't even imagine now where it might lead her.
This summer she lived at home and worked in a factory every day
Making rubber gaskets for refrigerators - it's not easy, she'd say.
At Thanksgiving she got the birthday present she craved more than any other -
A quick trip to Boston to visit her brother.

Becky, 17 has her brown belt in karate, Gallegos' school of Ishinryu,
And she plans to earn her black belt before she is through.
Senior year's been so busy, how does she do it!
The secret must be you have to be young to live through it.
She likes Spanish and music, not other studies and tests,
And this summer attended St. Olaf College Week for Teenage Organists.
Then there was summer diving team practice and stiff competition
And hours as an aide in Dick's office in addition.
In August she mastered the nurses' aide course at Community Hospital, Geneva, and now
works weekends and holidays whenever they need her.
What will her college major be - that is the question!
Nursing, music, or Spanish, do you have another suggestion?

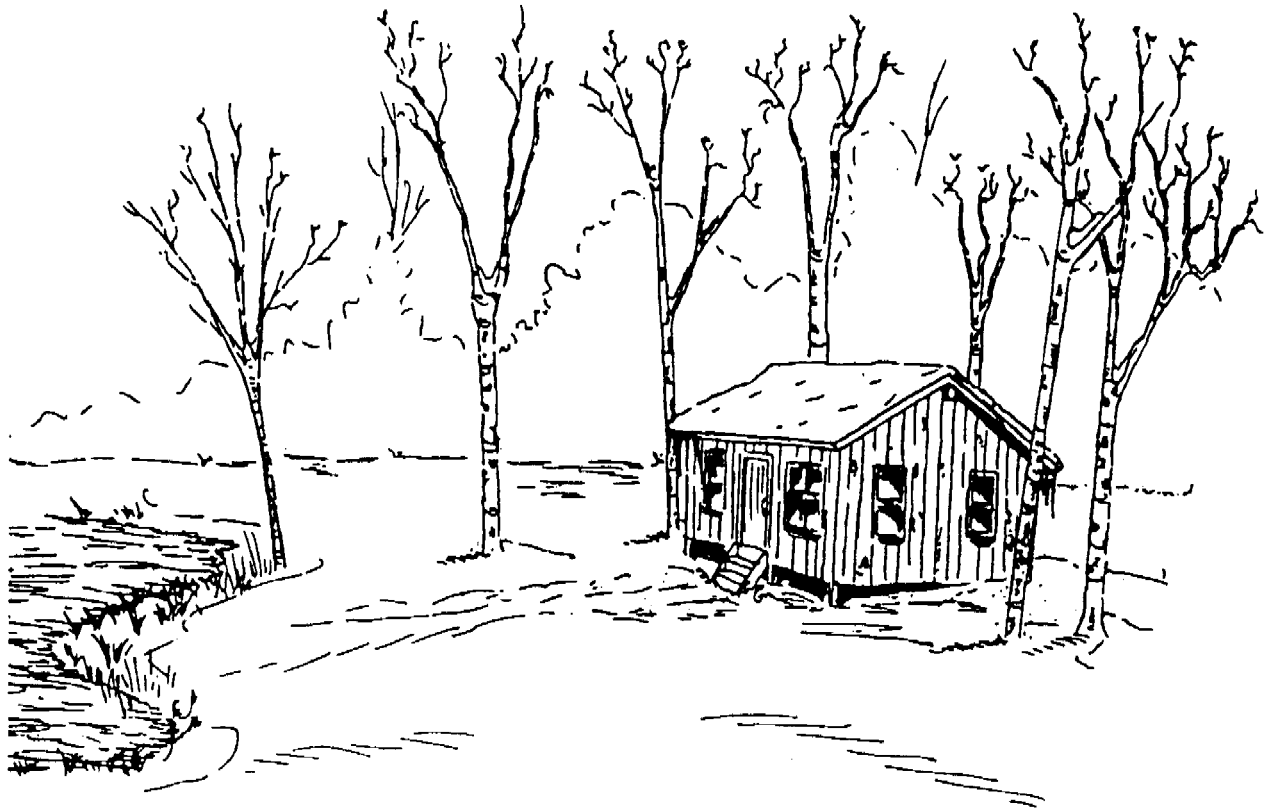
Janelle, almost eleven, enjoys her life as a musician.
Her newest instrument, the flute, she plays with such precision
That she is the first chair flutist in her grade school cadet band
And still practices the Harp and piano daily without reprimand.
Her high point this year, at Becky's suggestion, she tried out and won
The part of Amaryllis in the high school spring musical, "The Music Man".
(I must confess that when we attend their recitals and sit side by side
Their dear old Daddy's chest swells a little with pride).
She still loves, talks to, and tenderly cares for her pets,
Bonnie, the Great Dane, two guinea pigs and the remaining rabbits.
"I don't want to be an only child," Janelle says with a moan,
But we've thought of one advantage when she'll be left all alone:
Her bedroom, you see, has always been the small one
And next fall, when Becky leaves, she can have all of them!

To our own, sweet, resident, curmudgeon-at-large I've not yet alluded:
Dick's sought out the time and space this year to build the most secluded
Cabin in the faraway north woods on a hill
So we can watch the lake and the sunsets from our own windowsill.
Then we walk the old logging trails and consider the world, God, and man
Until we're at peace with ourselves once again.
We've found the west wind really does talk through the pine trees when it blows
And we're awed by that music as we snowshoe silently through the snows.
We saw and stack firewood, and when we get through,
Dick always finds additional chores we can do.
My contribution this spring was to plant 879 Christmas trees by hand -
Or should I say foot, or even aching back - to reforest the land.

Dick says to tell you he has a new goal to achieve -
He is tracing our family tree back to Adam and Eve.
So every night when he comes home exhausted from the office
He settles down to a few hours of genealogical research and bliss.
He says that it is inspiring and gives a great sense of history,
Though why any of us are here at all is still to him the Great Mystery.

To know, love, and serve God - we exist at His pleasure.
May you know his blessings and love this New Year in full measure.

Dick and June Grayson



THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE BIG WOODS

Christmas 1974

Can you believe it's Christmas once more
And time to send greetings for 1974!

Our home seems so empty - now there's only Janelle -
When children grow up they don't dilly-dally;
They just go out on their own and no longer want our advice
(Though we have some left over - we keep it on ice).
But this Christmas again, praise the Lord, they'll come home
So I'd better hurry and finish this poem.

Dan, 22, is hard at work on his graduate thesis
On algebraic geometry at M.I.T. in Massachusetts.
He's explained to me over and over, it seems,
What algebraic geometry really means.
I even called him tonight and he said, "Mom, it's no use,
Why don't you just plan to leave the whole subject abstruse!
You don't understand K theory, Chow groups, or Albanese variety
And, besides, there's no application for all this in any society."
But he has a Sloan Fellowship this year and that means he gets paid
To discover Grayson's Second Theory of Relativity without aid.
Now the big question is, will Dan cut his hair
To visit New Jersey this Christmas with Carol?

Kris is 21 this month and we're almost friends once again.
How rich and tumultuous these past years have been!
We think she grows dearer and more beautiful every day.
Of course, we're not really objective but we like it that way.
Last spring she studied in Mexico - a great education -
And showed Becky all the sights over Easter vacation.

She'll have a double major in Spanish and sociology
With a teaching certificate in bilingual philosophy.
Now she's already investigating graduate schools far away
Which causes dear Father some further dismay.
I guess we're just lucky, when I reflect upon it,
That there's no spaceship to Mars, or she'd surely be on it.

Becky, 18, has grown older and spunky.
She has let it be known she'll be nobody's flunky.
She graduated from St. Charles High School last May
And all summer made refrigerator gaskets every day.
She started at St. Olaf College this fall
But hasn't chosen her major after all.

It's not going to be nursing, she thought music for awhile,
So she studied voice and sang in the choirs all this fall.
But now she's decided that French and psychology
Would be the basis of the perfect ethnology
For exciting studies and a lifetime career -
And maybe she can study with Selye next year.

As for Janelle, almost 12, what more can I say
But that she's the light of our life every day.
She keeps trying to make a good housekeeper out of me
And defends her absent siblings to Father as necessary.
Heaven was starting seventh grade at Dunham Junior High this fall
With challenging studies, music, girl-talk, and all.
And accompanying the high school choir in concert on her harp
Under Mr. Stoffel's direction - one has to be sharp.
She's fun to be with on our family weekend excursions
To the lake, relatives, old cemeteries, flea markets - some favorite diversions.

Now for the last part of our story but the first in my heart
Richard the Lion-Hearted plays the big part.
I accuse him of mellowing with age and he hotly denies it
So he roars around now and then, hoping his action belies it.
He has his medical practice, his speeches, his writing,
And time for the hobbies he finds most exciting.
He's discovered all these interesting ancestors he never knew he had.
The only trouble, he says, is that they're already dead!
They were farmers, writers, and soldiers - the Graysons, Benjamin, Andrew, John Wren,
But we'll wait for the communion of saints before we see them again.

On June 2nd, Becky and Janelle gave us a patio tree
Hung with shiny dollars for our silver wedding anniversary.
So after twenty-five years we've almost got it all together
And with a little help from our Friend we just might make it forever.
Home, family, and friends seem more precious the older we grow;
Work at the office, the Church, music - so fast the years go!

We wish you a Merry Christmas to celebrate Christ's birth.
We wish you a Happy New Year. God bless our little earth.

Dick and June Grayson

Christmas 1975

'Tis the week before Christmas and time's going fast.
Nineteen hundred and seventy-five will soon belong to the past.
But we're not growing older, we're growing better, you bet,
So there's plenty of life in this family yet.

What is our most exciting news you can hear?
We'll have our fourth daughter, we hope, sometime next year.
But this one the easy way, for Dan found her himself,
And she couldn't be nicer if I had picked her myself.
She's Carol Livingstone of New Jersey, and in June they came here
To meet all the family and friends we hold dear.
They bought the engagement and wedding ring, too,
Set with little sapphires, all sparkling and blue.

Carol graduated last June from M.I.T.
And started this fall at Columbia University
For graduate work in neurophysiology
Studying cell membrane behavior and pathology.
Now Dan has to finish his thesis and then look for work
Because he's still in Cambridge this year and Carol's in New York.
So if you know a college that needs a professor in algebraic geometry
Call here collect and hang the economy!

Kris, 22, is student-teaching this fall
At Humboldt Senior High School in the town of St. Paul.
In social studies, Spanish, and bilingual education,
She'll teach or seek a graduate school situation.
She says she feels the best she ever has in her life
Since she had her operation this summer under the knife
Of Doctor William F. Hughes of St. Luke's-Presbyterian:
Recession of the eye muscles: left lateral and left median.
Now she no longer sees double - which caused other symptoms bizarre -
And she can go without glasses and even drive the car.
She's a member of the Union of Restaurant Workers of America
As a waitress at Ramada Inn (she prefers that summer work to clerical).

Becky, 19, has chosen her area of knowledge:
She is studying psychology at St. Olaf College.
To lose her summer job at the factory was a blessing, she agrees,
Because she found work requiring new expertise

In behavior modification at the North Aurora Center
And studied the psychology books her supervisor lent her.
She loved all the residents and workers (mostly male) too
And never ran out of fun things to do.
If the University of San Juan accepts her application
She'll go to Puerto Rico and see friend Sigrid after Christmas vacation.

Janelle, 12, grew five inches taller this summer.
For mother and father that was really a bummer!
Even her sisters' old clothes were too short and too small
So she had to buy everything new for this fall.
She withdrew her life savings to buy round city airfare
To Houston and Dallas to see all her cousins there.
They were so nice to her that she didn't want to come home
But we're not ready yet to go it alone.
So she practices her music and studies for tests every day
And dreams of the day she, too, will grow up and go away.

Let's talk now of Richard before this roundelay ends:
Family protagonist and most beloved of friends;
Brave pioneer in the wild woods of Wisconsin;
Intrepid explorer with the house trailer on and bouncing;
After-dinner speaker, philosopher, genealogist,
Construction engineer, ham radio operator, agronomist,
Conscientious doctor, ever-loving father, son,
Brother, husband, and sweetheart all rolled into one.

Dick says I should tell you more about me.
(I had hoped my activities could escape scrutiny).
I help with the home, children, office, and garden,
Collect antique dolls, practice Bach on the organ,
Extol the virtues of a vegetarian diet,
Sew on my quilts when the house finally is quiet,
Help edit a cookbook and plan the Christmas bazaar,
And keep in touch with our friends wherever they are.

Be near us, Lord Jesus, we ask you to stay
Close by us forever and love us, we pray.
Bless all the dear people in your tender care.
Prepare us for heaven to live with you there.

Dick and June Grayson

Christmas 1976

Deck all the halls and invite everyone in -
The 1976 Christmas Season is about to begin.

Dan, 24, finished four years of graduate work in math at M.I.T.
When he defended his thesis last spring and received his Ph.D.
While Carol studied in New York and joined the Bard Hall Players (musical-thespian)
And in March sang the lead, Phyllis, in Iolanthe, by Gilbert and Sullivan.
Dan spent the summer at Bielefeld, Germany, in the Black Forest
As a math lecturer - next time he wants Carol with him - his only request.
At last August 29, 1976, drew near - the day of their life
When Dan and Carol would become husband and wife.
We all took the weekend off and flew to Hohokus, New Jersey,
To meet Carol's family and attend the wedding ceremony.
Jane Livingstone, Carol's mother is one of the best hostesses of our nation
While Carol's two handsome brothers, like her father, Ed, are in physical education.
(And Janelle said she found it impossible to surmise
If Ed Livingstone or Paul Newman has the most beautiful blue eyes).
To the beaches of Puerto Rico for their honeymoon they flew
And then back to their life together, apartment, job - all so new -
At Columbia University where Carol studies physiology with grad school affiliation
And Dan is assistant professor and has six articles awaiting publication.

Kris, 23, brought home Someone Special last December -
With Gary Hestilow of Minnesota you don't mess around, just remember:
Athlete, accountant, karate school co-owner,
Black belt holder, teacher, and tournament promoter.
Then Kris went to Mexico in January to finish her senior thesis in sociology
On the Role of the Maid in Mexican Emerging Industrial Society.
Back to St. Olaf College in February where she called us to say
That she and Gary were announcing their engagement on Valentine's Day.
Then things began to get really exciting:
We were planning a wedding by phone calls and writing.
Saturday, March 27th, they gave their vows to each other
Attended by Julie Gordon and Dan, Kris's big brother.
In St. Mark's Lutheran Church here at home with Pastor Zersen.
(I wish you all could have been with us in person).
When Kris graduated from St. Olaf College magna cum laude in May
We met Gary's parents who drove up from Texas for her special day.
Kris now works at the Health Club, teaches swimming,
And, under Gary's direction, trains for karate tournament winning.
At the meeting of the Minnesota Sociologists this fall
Her thesis won top prize with honorarium and all
Went to buy Isabel, a Siamese kitten, which joined them last week.
Now their home hears the patter of four little feet.

Becky, 20, has taken control of her life.
Her goal is to be a psychologist, mother, and wife.
During January interim she visited her friend, Sigrid Gonzales,
In Puerto Rico- she had so much to tell us
About that beautiful land and the people she met.
If she had her way, why, she might be there yet!
Then she went back to St. Olaf to finish her sophomore year
And said good-by in the spring to her college friends dear.
At home for the summer she practiced her song for Dan's wedding, "Follow Me",
And worked at Furnas Electric before going to the wedding in New Jersey.
She transferred to the University of Iowa this fall
And thinks her curriculum there meets her needs better all in all.
Now she likes having her own apartment at college
And advising us with her psychological knowledge.

In the spring, Janelle, 13, played the part of Mrs. McAfee
In the Haines Junior High play, "Bye, Bye, Birdie".
Cousin Lisa came for five short weeks during June and July
And they took junior lifesaving and sewing lessons before saying good-by.
In August Janelle had a new, long, peach-colored dress
For Dan's wedding: a bridesmaid, that was the best!
The passing of years has taken its inevitable toll
Of Janelle's family of animals.
Her last rabbit just died - Licorice by name,
And we all still miss Bonnie, the Great Dane.
Janelle says she has a disadvantaged childhood
For all her siblings have left her here in solitude.

Dick regrets he has no heroic deeds to disclose
And the only thing that he can diagnose
Is that he is depressed
By contemplation of our empty nest.
Birds and children fly away
To return another day.
He's still writing, speaking, and researching on Stress and Stressors
And also has clues and will travel to chase missing ancestors.
And he has some new hobbies: he loves staying home,
And he won't go out anymore just to roam.
And he's fixing up the house and repairing the ravages
Of all those years of child-rearing: that produces damages.
He might become a master carpenter, in addition,
And custom-build privies, that is his ambition.
Though after a day of hammering nails in
He's decided it is easier to practice medicine.

I have a new hobby, learning to swim,
And I don't do too badly considering the shape I am in.
The spirit is eager but the flesh, oh, how weak!
And I'm scared of the water when it's over four inches deep.
But I've great swimming coaches and I am stubborn as sin
So wish me luck training for the two mile swim.

Dick says, "June, you must be suffering from megalomania
For how can a two mile swim be even attainable
When you can't swim one length of the pool, let alone two,
And, besides, haven't you anything better to do?
Go to the office and home to do housework: just do my bidding."
(After twenty-seven years - housework? Dear Richard, you HAVE to be kidding!)
So tune in next year, same time and same station, to see
If the two mile swim got the better of me.

Again this year as previous years we dimly perceive
How life should be lived by those who believe.
But we're still human in nature and so we have to depend
On God's guidance and mercy and love without end.

Dick and June Grayson

Christmas 1977

In this year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy seven
The Graysons give thanks to God in his heaven
For prayers that were answered - and some that were not -
And the guidance to learn what this life's all about.

All of our children still bring us great joy
Be they little or big, near or far, a girl or a boy.
We have three of the former and one of the latter
And a daughter and son-in-law, but what does it matter!
They are all good children, we say this with pride,
Which lets us accept any small flaws in stride.

New York City's the home of Carol and Dan
Where he writes mathematical papers we can't understand.
Carol pursues graduate studies and sings for enjoyment.
Dan teaches math at Columbia University for employment.

St. Paul, Minnesota, is home to Gary and Kris
Where working together in karate is their kind of bliss.
Kris studies sociology in grad school as well
And in physical fitness they both really excel.

Becky finishes college in Iowa City, Iowa, this year
And is happy because John Bennett, her boyfriend, is near.
Who knows what their future holds - there is so much to plan:
More college, grad school, and work someplace in the land.

Janelle is in tenth grade and still with us at home
But she says it's so dull being a child here all alone.
So she visited cousins this summer and Kris at Thanksgiving.
And the rest of the time she just lights up our living.

In April Dick finally had to undergo
Surgery for a gallstone - but now he's well head to toe.
In spite of our age we remain remarkably fit
Though our waists keep expanding a wee little bit,
I practice swimming and the church organ and harp.
(If water were never over my head I would really be sharp).
We like work, home, family, friends, the North lakes and wood
Where the black bears now roam - and we wish that we could!

May you know that God loves you in whatever you do
So that your hearts may be happy all the year through.
We ask God to give us the power to praise
And serve him with gladness to the end of our days,

Dick and June Grayson

Christmas, 1978

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing.
For family and friends may there be nothing distressing.
As the year 1978 draws to a close
Another Christmas poem we will try to compose.

Our children are well, we are happy to say,
With much to be thankful for day after day.

Dan is at Columbia University teaching and writing.
His summer trip to Finland for a math meeting was really exciting.
Carol works on her doctoral thesis and, in addition,
Plans to start on her MBA soon. Oh, what ambition!

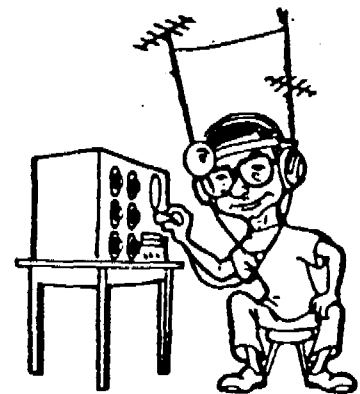
Gary edits and publishes a new karate newspaper
And promotes the "Super Fights" - that national caper.
Kris, sports sociologist, for goals has these three:
Get her black belt in karate, win all her fights, and earn her Ph.D..

Becky graduated Phi Beta Kappa this fall
With honors in psychology - and that is not all -
Now she's a graduate student at Kent State University,
A teaching and research assistant in clinical psychology.

I swear Janelle takes lessons in everything under the sun
And then teaches piano and flute when her own work is done.
She's first chair flautist, Honor Society member, harp soloist too,
And so far she has not run out of something to do.

Dick is back on ham radio after working all day.
It's the greatest of hobbies for relaxing that way.
Every spare minute he is sure to be found
Calling CQ, CQ, DX, is anyone around?
Out of 317 countries he has contacted 104
And every day the mailman brings more QSL cards to our door.
June organizes little things at church, office and home
And enjoys hobbies and friends and writing this poem.

So let us be joyful and glad carols sing
For this is the birthday of Jesus, our King.
What of the future? Only this much we know
God holds the future. Amen. Let it be so.



Christmas 1979

Assailed by reports of recession, inflation, shortages, violence, crime,
We thank the dear Lord for the message of each Christmas time
That love is stronger than hate and faith stronger than fear
And happiness is trusting God's guidance all year.

We cherish home, family, friends, hobbies, and church,
The solace of music, the discipline of work.
We've weathered the empty nest syndrome and the middle age blues
So let's hear it now for only good news.

Dan and Carol, New York, worked hard and saved in advance
So that they could spend all their summer vacation in France.
Carol expects her Ph.D. in January and our first grandchild in June.
Oh, happy day! Dan teaches college math and keeps their piano in tune.

A new home and office is in Minnetonka, Minnesota, for Gary and Kris.
To win black belt and best student award allows Kris no cowardice.
Gary's karate business is growing, the Super Fights, too.
Editing the Sports Karate News gives him plenty to do.

Becky studies clinical psychology in graduate school at Kent State,
Counsels clients, teaches, plans research and writing to earn her doctorate.
She has her car and apartment, two pet cats, and lots of dear friends,
Likes to cook, or sing and play her guitar sometimes when the day ends.

Janelle, high school senior, has much too much fun!
Besides study, practice, and work these are some of the things she has done:
Jesus Christ Superstar cast, canoe trip, summer music camp for her harp,
Modeling school graduation, job interviews she has to be sharp.

Richard, our own personal wheel, keeps going around
To office, hospital, nursing home and house calls all over the town.
At home he likes to contact all countries with his ham radio equipment.
At church he has welfare and refugee resettlement commitment.

Besides assisting husband and children at office and home
I decided this year to strike out on my own
As a substitute organist for ten area churches on call,
And although I'm too busy, I am having a ball!
Do you think we are happy? Well, you better believe it!
After thirty and a half years we were bound to achieve it!
As for the New Year, we wish you all well.
God bless you and keep you, and have a merry Noel.

Dick and June Grayson

Who then
can ever keep Christ's love
from us?
When we have trouble
or calamity,
When we are, hunted down
or destroyed,
Is it because
He doesn't love us anymore?

And if we are hungry,
or penniless,
or in danger,
or threatened with death,
Has God deserted us?

NO,
For I am convinced
that nothing can ever separate us
from His love.
Death can't,
and life can't ...
Our for today,
our worries about tomorrow ...
Nothing will ever be able to separate us
from the love of God
Demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ
when He died for us.

Romans 8:35-39

Christmas 1980



How could one year be so full-and exciting?
The following chronology may be somewhat enlightening.
Our first grandchild was born in New York City on June 10th of this year.
Paul Daniel Grayson, 7 pounds, 8 ounces, is really a dear. .
In August so we could all get acquainted they came home on vacation
For Paul's baptism at St. Mark's Lutheran church, reunions, and relaxation.
Carol defended her Ph.D. thesis, "Lipid Fluidity of Rat Hepatocyte Membranes",
And gets A in all her MBA classes. A normal mother -- no stresses or strains!
Dan continues math teaching, research, baby-sitting, and writing a job resume.
We hope that next year's job offers will allow them to move closer this way.

Gary and Kris moved to Oklahoma City last May.
We miss them a lot now that they are so far away.
Gary is Director of Sales at the Century Martial Arts Supply Company
And Kris finds teaching English as a Second Language satisfactory
To 35 children who don't speak English at all
Representing nine different languages and cultures. Sounds like a ball!

"Behavioral Components of Four Classes of Assertiveness", clinical psychology,
Was the thesis Becky defended in June to get her MA at Kent State University.
In July she began work in Cleveland at the Burroughs Computer Corporation
As an associate systems representative -- she provides technical indoctrination.
She explains that personal problems and solutions come in all shades of gray
But computers are black and white - and for now she likes it that way.

Janelle is a freshman at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana,
And says that everything about college is almost nirvana.
At her high school graduation she won two prizes -- we were really quite proud:
The Chamber of Commerce, and the Senator John Grotberg Best Music Student Award.
Now she practises her harp, her Muramatsu flute, still models and teaches,
And studies business and music. Who knows where all this will lead her?

Dick still trains for the Olympics maybe forty years hence
With jogging, racquetball, and chopping firewood when things get tense.
We drove around Lake Superior with our trailer for summer vacation
And enjoyed the Canadian parks and a personal bagpipe demonstration.
Sorrow was saying good-bye to a friend who was more like a brother.
When Stan Levine died we knew there could never be another.

Don't ever wish for something -- you might get it -- what a vexation!
I (June) wanted to lose ten pounds and take a vacation.
So I got both of my wishes, but it was really the pits,
Because I didn't like any part of it, not one little bit.

Accelerating angina and a positive angiogram dictated emergency surgery
At Loyola University Hospital November 20th by Dr. Roque Pifarre.
Just a little double coronary bypass operation;
How can I complain? Not even one complication!

So you see 1980 has had its share of laughter and tears.
We're thankful for our love affair of 31 1/2 years,
For our children who all rallied round when we needed them,
For the prayers of family and friends, and for the good Lord who heeded them.

May your Christmas be joyous and your New Year fulfill
All you need to be happy and to do the Lord's will.



Dick and June Grayson

Christmas 1981

It's the week before Christmas and we're cutting the tree
In our woods in Wisconsin, just Richard and me.
The kids have all left us, so all right for them --
We'll just get along without them again.

Dan, math professor, U. of Illinois, on fellowship pay
Studies, as usual, algebraic geometry and the Theory of K
As a member of the Institute of Advanced Study where Einstein once thrived
At Princeton, New Jersey. Their address is Von Neumann Drive.

Carol, management consultant with Sibson and Company,
Is a member of Columbia's business school honor society.
She structures personnel packages and executive pay
And is completing the final requirements for her MBA.

Paul Daniel, only grandchild on both sides, is our pride and our joy.
Was there ever a more beloved 1 1/2 year old little boy?
He says 78 words, likes toys with wheels, and is growing quite tall.
Dan says he is perfect; we don't doubt that at all.

They'll be here the day after Christmas
You can bet we can't wait.
We hope that the airplane won't be one minute late.

Gary, financial executive, handles advertising and sales
At Century Martial Arts, and all that entails.
Kris is a bilingual teacher in the Oklahoma City schools.
She likes the children she teaches and the chance to make her own rules.

On weekends they redecorate their spacious new home
Where their Siamese cats, Isabel and Simon, have room now to roam.
They say the southwest economy is booming and it's so nice to be warm!
They didn't like Minnesota's long winters and the many snowstorms.

We'll miss them at Christmas -- they can't get away
Because Kris has eye surgery scheduled the following day.

Becky, computer consultant with Burroughs, has to travel a lot
And she likes to visit her friends so she does get about.
She plays racquetball and guitar -- though not at the same time, I am sure;
Likes to dance and hopes to become a wine connoisseur.
She's healthy at last, along with her two cats, Sophie and Meiling,
And survived another year in Cleveland. That is not a small thing!

Janelle, sophomore at U. of Illinois at Urbana,
Studies business and music all day, night, and manana.
She's an Alpha Xi Delta, a Robeson Store college board member,
And professional harpist at Mill Race Inn this December.

Dick practices his banjo at home every night,
Likes bluegrass music, hopes to get it just right.
He publishes the Grayson newsletter on genealogy
And is "surgeon" of the Illinois Mayflower Descendants' Society.

I'm finishing my term as St. Mark's Social Welfare Director
And am also a gardener, musician, and antique collector.
My coronary bypass scars have all faded and I am better than new
So I have no excuses, there is nothing I can't try to do.

Last February we drove to Perryville, Missouri, through deep winter snow
To visit the wonderful friends that we loved long years ago:
Alpha Bergmann, The Bushes, Flora Kamper, all the Carrons, Paul and Shay Bey,
The Dickmanns, Fairchilds, McDermotts, the Vogels -- what a great day!

We've got to admit we have cause to be glad
When we count all the bountiful blessings we've had.
So what if we're older and some of our hairs have turned gray
And we can't run the marathon! Praise the Lord anyway!

Dick and June Grayson

*It is Christmas and we wish you happiness.
And tomorrow, because it will be the day after Christmas,
We shall still wish you happiness.
Whatever joy or success comes to you will make us glad.
Clear through the years - we wish you the spirit of Christmas.*

Christmas 1982

Here once again are those two rhyming Kris Kringles
Overflowing with news for our holiday jingles
To send the same old greeting to friends we hold dear -
Merry Christmas to all and have a Happy New Year.

Dan and Carol and dear little Paul
Moved to the U. of Illinois in Urbana this fall.
Carol's on sabbatical and Dan teaches math
While Paul is traversing the adorable two's path.
Paul likes to do puzzles, watch the Wizard of Oz on TV,
Play with trains, and to be read to incessantly.

For Gary and Kris in Oklahoma City life is sublime.
They are both busy working most of the time.
He's in business, she teaches - but this is the best!
In April they expect Baby Hestilow to be part of their nest.

Becky plans to be married next February
So son number three will then join the family.
She met this man of perfection last spring
And on August 22nd he gave her the engagement ring.
Gregory Paul Jaxon is a systems programmer for Burroughs Corporation
And as a consultant for computer languages flies all over the nation.
He likes music and plays the synthesizer for a hobby,
Likes to swim, and is into amateur photography.
In October they came home and we all gathered round
To introduce Greg to everyone in town
And to help plan the wedding; time is going so fast
That I hope we are ready before it is past.
For now they both talk to computers at Burroughs all day
And plan their new home in West Chester, PA.

Can you believe Janelle is already a junior in college!
(Our baby!) She's seeking business and marketing knowledge.
She'll play her harp at Mill Race Inn, Geneva, this vacation
So go there for dinner if you need recreation.

Richard is happy because he has a new toy.
His new computer terminal is his pride and his joy.
He hooks into data basing to do medical research every night
To get all the new treatments for his patients just right.
He's chairman of medicine and the medical education committee

At Delnor Hospital in our little city.
The news of our world every day grows more bizarre.
As never before we need the light from that star
That illumines the ages and brings God to man --
God still loves the world, all is part of His plan.

Walking with Jesus makes our burdens seem light.
May you see His Star shining on this dark Christmas night.

Dick and June Grayson

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING

(Christmas and 12th Night - Sigrid Undset 1932)

And when we give each other Christmas gifts in His name, let us remember that He has given us the sun and the moon and the moon and the earth with its forests and mountains and oceans and all that lives and moves upon them. He has given us all green things and everything that blossoms and bears fruit and all that we quarrel about and that we have misused And to save us from our own foolishness, from all our sins, He came down to earth and gave us Himself.

WHAT WE HOPE FOR, PRAY FOR, LIVE FOR, COMES AS A BLESSING.

I
think
that we
shall always
see, God's
gifts upon our
Christmas tree;
You cannot touch them with your hand,
Yet they are there at your command.
There's joy and faith and
hope renewed, There's
laughter for a happy mood,
There's gratitude for each new
day; A time to think, a time
to pray. The Christ
idea with holy light, shines
clear to make your pathway bright.
These things are yours if you can see
God's gifts
upon
your
Christmas
tree.

Christmas 1983



To you and yours we send this sonnet
With all the best of wishes on it.
So strum the harps and blow the trumpets!
Come on in for tea and crumpets.
We'll escape the wintry blast
To review the year that's past.

Dan and Carol and grandson one:
Little Paul -- have lots of fun.
Dan is thinking, teaching, writing,
Still finds all math theorems exciting.
Carol is "Director-Acting"
Of U. of I's MBA program exacting.
Paul likes chess and nursery school,
Computer games and Dr. Who.

Gary, Kris, and little Richie
Live in Oklahoma City.
Gary is CMA's VP of Operations:
Sales, marketing, customer relations.
Kris is teaching English still
To new citizens; it takes lots of skill.
While Richard Chester Hestilow,
Born on April 19th eight months ago,
Is a healthy, happy cherubim
Who's learning Spanish and how to swim.

Greg and Becky's wedding date
Was February 12th, the weather great!
Pastor, Priest, joined hands to bless
And to wish them happiness.
Friends and relatives gathered round
For the nicest ball in town.
They drove back to PA, no more to roam,
To computer work and their new home
And went in August, the time opportune
For their Puerto Rico honeymoon.

Janelle's college days are almost over.
No more living just in clover!
Now must come the hardest part:
Job interviews just have to start.

The outside world is cold and cruel
So Happy New Year and Merry Yule.

Good-by, Wisconsin, the lakes, the trees;
But we have our memories.
Dick and I know what we'll be
When we grow up eventually.
He'll take pictures and I'll write stories
And we'll go on to greater glories!
So while our planet's slowly spinning
We wish you all a new beginning.

Jesus loves us this we know
For the Bible tells us so.
He will help us if we share
All our cares with Him in prayer.

Dick and June Grayson

THOU SHALT KNOW HIM WHEN HE COMES

Not by any din of drums -

Not the vantage of his airs -

Not by anything He wears -

Nor His gown -

FOR HIS PRESENCE SHALL BE KNOWN

By the Holy Harmony

That His coming makes in thee--

-Unknown 15th Century writer

Christmas 1984

There are two kinds of people who are going about,
Ones who like Christmas letters and ones who could just do without.
If you're one of the latter we still want to say
God bless you this Christmas before you toss this away.

But we like Christmas letters so please keep them coming
And we can have lots of good fun in the summing
Up of the highlights, the laughter, the tears,
Of all of the stages of these swift passing years.

There's one cosmic constant we don't understand.
How can every dear grandchild be the best in the land?
We know it is true because all of our grandchildren are great
And we wish we had more of them -- say about eighty-eight.

Paul Daniel Grayson lives in his new home in Urbana, Illinois.
He's a blond, curly-haired, tall, four and a half year old boy.
Father Dan is associate professor, U. of Illinois, with tenure in math.
Mom, Carol Livingstone, teaches computers to students on the MBA path.

Richard Chester Hestilow, Oklahoma City, is a cutey, eighteen months old,
And we wish he'd visit more often, he's so sweet to hold.
Father Gary is a VIP at C.M.A.S. - the President, wow!
So Kris Grayson, Richie's mom, gets to stay home all the time now.

Elizabeth Nicole Grayson Jaxon, born October 3rd, in Philadelphia, PA,
Besides being gorgeous, knows how to eat, sleep, and play.
Becky and Greg Jaxon, when not busy parenting, continue to be
Whizzes at Burroughs Corporation, a computer company.

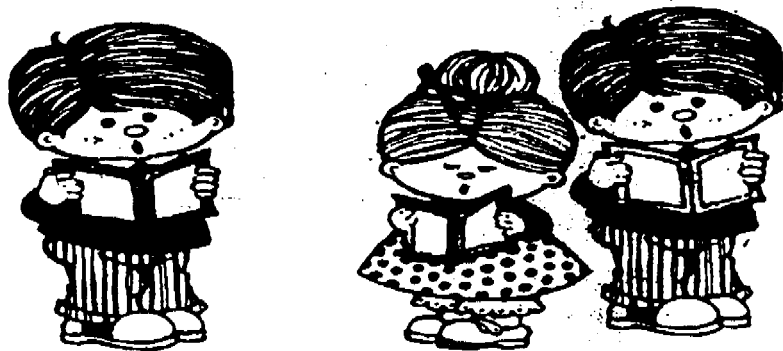
Janelle, our own youngest, graduated from college last May,
Works in sales, plays her harp, and is planning the day,
When she can buy a new car and move out on her own
Like all the others so she can live all alone.

June has grown lazy, we hate to admit it.
She's out of the office more hours than she's in it.
But Richard is stalwart and faithful and true
To patients and family. But that's not all that we do.

The rest of the time we spend with our cameras and writing.
Research and field trips make each day more exciting.
We do a newsletter, a medical column, and claim as our field

The universe and all its manifestations, a bountiful yield.
The saints of all ages and in every tradition
proclaim the GOOD NEWS. That is their only commission.
God is here with us now, not someplace out there,
The invisible made visible with blessings to share.

Dick and June Grayson



Joy To The World

Christmas 1985

Songs of thanks the Graysons sing,
Make the walls and rafters ring.
Christmas brings our children home
From the places where they roam.

Carol and Dan live in Urbana.
They like to play on their new piano.
He's an honored "University Scholar".
"Computer Services" pays her top dollar.

Beloved child is little Paul,
Five years old and growing tall.
Kindergarten, dinosaurs,
Building blocks make happy hours.

OK City is home to Gary and Kris.
A new Mercedes Benz is his.
Kristi plans the Bible school,
Home and kids she also rules.

First-born son is Richie, two.
He likes to visit at the zoo,
Watch Sesame Street, read Dr. Seuss,
Eat hamburgers and apple juice.

September brought them Amy sweet,
Richie thinks she's really neat.
She eats and sleeps and even cries,
Time to sing those lullabies.

Becky and Greg live in West Chester, PA.
He remodels their home on Saturday.
She directs the children's choir,
Sings Christmas solos to inspire.

For Beth, their daughter, now age one,
All the fun has just begun.
She walks and talks and plays all day.
She is perfect, her parents say.

Still at home is our Janelle,
Working now in personnel,
Oakbrook office - busy days.
Harp and flute at night she plays.

Let's have cheers for Richard, too,
Doctor, father, husband true,
Edits, writes, plays racketball,
Photographs, is still on call.

Here is news of June, at last,
Writer, nurse, enthusiast,
Contest winner - exciting times,
And the author of these rhymes.

Songs of thanks forever sing,
Let the hallelujahs ring.
God will guide us where we roam
Till we reach our heavenly home.

Dick and June Grayson

*You made the word Thy temple, Lord, to fit out simple prayer
That Christmas time may touch the hearts of all men everywhere.
We ask no special favors, Lord, except to hope You'll bless
The friends and kin whom we hold dear with Christmas happiness.*

Christmas 1986

Again our task is seeking rhyme
To greet you at this Christmas time
With fervent prayers that God will bless
Your year with health and happiness.

Our children, still our greatest joy,
Various independent skills employ.

For Dan and Carol and grandson Paul
Home is the U of Illinois, so near us all.
Carol heads the Computer Services Department,
Dan at theoretical math is diligent,
Paul, age six, fills first grade hours
With science, friends, and dinosaurs.

Gary, Richie, Amy, Kris,
In Oklahoma find their family bliss.
Gary is the karate company's president,
At three, Richie's into angelic devilment,
Amy, age one, smiles on all she knows,
While Kris keeps all of them on their toes.

Becky, Greg, and Beth, so sweet,
Think Pennsylvania can't be beat.
Unisys computer work fills all their days,
Beth, age two, explores and plays.

The Sixth of April was the day
Dick gave his "baby" girl away.
Janelle Cecile wed Randall Ream.
What a party! What a team!
A tall, dark, handsome sausage maker,
Jazz musician, chances taker.
Their Elburn home is never mute
With harp, piano, saxophone, and flute.

Dick doesn't have much time to roam;
Office, hospitals, nursing homes.
Edits, writes, plays racketball,
Programs computers all this fall.

June won a New York holiday
Courtesy Germaine Monteil.
Still office nurse, non-fiction writer,
Always carries her favorite Leica.

We're growing older - give three cheers -
Still sprightly after all these years!

Dick and June Grayson

*Fear not, For I have redeemed you,
I have called you by name,
You are mine.
When you pass through the waters
I will be with you,
And through the rivers, they will
not flow over you.
When you walk through the fire
you will not be burned.
For I am the Lord, your God,
your Saviour.*

Isaiah 43:3

Christmas 1987

This Grayson writer picks up pen
To fashion Christmas verse again
While Richard brings in tree and holly.
It is the season to be jolly.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous years speed by. You see
Those precious babies that we cuddled
Have disappeared into adulthood.

Dan's 35: thinks, travels, teaches,
Scuba dives from distant beaches.
Carol planned her campus work
Around a visit from the stork
So David Edward could appear
On June the Seventh, give a cheer.
Paul likes sports and second grade,
Computer games and friends he's made.

Kris, 34, has duties all parental
While Gary does things presidential.
They still live in Oklahoma.
At least it's nearer than Tacoma.
Richie, four, and Amy, two,
Have fun and games they must pursue.

Becky, 31, moved back to Illinois,
Her husband, Greg, now will employ
His skills as software engineer
At a huge computer here.
Beth is three and dark and tall,
Verbal and a friend to all.

Janelle, 24, and Randy Ream
In everything make quite a team.
They own a wholesale sausage plant
And both make music elegant.
When Janelle's not sausage stuffing
She runs six miles without huffing.

Richard still spends all his days
At doctoring, let's give him praise.



Hobbies bring him lots of fun:
Computers still his favorite one.
June seeks perfection in her crafts -
Writes and takes those photographs.

Our prayers ascend this Christmastide,
In peace, dear Lord, with us abide.
We share good wishes, though we're late.
The best to you in Eighty-Eight.

Dick and June Grayson

ON THIS DAY...

*Mend a quarrel.
Search out a forgotten friend.
Dismiss suspicion. Replace it with trust.
Write a love letter. Share some treasure.
Give a soft answer. Encourage youth.
Manifest your loyalty in word and deed.
Keep a promise. Find the time.
Forego a grudge.
Forgive an enemy.
Listen. Apologize if you were wrong.
Try to understand. Flout envy.
Examine your demands on others.
Think first of someone else.
Appreciate, be kind, be gentle.
Laugh a little more.*

*Deserve confidence. Decry complacency.
Take up arms against malice.
Express your gratitude.
Worship your God.
Gladden the heart of a child.
Take pleasure in the beauty and the wonder of the earth.*

*Speak your love. Speak it again.
Speak it still again.
Speak it still once again.*

-Source unknown

Christmas 1988

*BELOVED, I WISH ABOVE ALL THINGS
THOU MAYEST PROSPER AND BE IN
GOOD HEALTH: John 1:2*



With thousands of bright lights aglow
On city streets swirled white with snow,
Again we start our year-end scramble
To find rhymes for this Christmas gambol.

Dan, math professor, U. of I. in Urbana,
Helped write new software, MATHEMATICA.
Carol and her college staff must now perfect
A new campus payroll computer project.
Paul, age eight, acted in his third-grade play.
Nintendo, legos, and piano practice fill his day.
David, eighteen months and walking tall,
Likes cuckoo clocks, picture books, and playing ball.

In Oklahoma City, Kris and Gary
Welcomed their third nestling, Mary
Kristine on January Twelfth. She looks like Daddy.
Gary says - I must have been a beautiful baby!
Amy, three, and brave as she could be
On April Eighth had major surgery:
Congenital choledochal cyst resection.
Prognosis now? We hope perfection.
Richie, five, started kindergarten in the fall,
Likes putt-putt golf with Daddy at the Mall.
Ginger, playful puppy, lab retriever, one hundred pounds,
Guards home and family and patrols the grounds.

Greg and Becky organic-garden in their yard.
Remodeling their Champaign home is sometimes hard.
Greg writes computer programs esoteric
While Becky's present duties are more generic,
Producing Noah Grayson Jaxon on the Fifth of June.
Just call this tiger "Speedy" - he'll be walking soon.
Beth, now four, likes games of concentration,
Gymnastics, reading, and family vacation.

In Elburn, Janelle and Randy spend their time
At Ream's Meat Processing making prime
Meat products both gourmet and plain,
Whatever their Fox Valley customers ordain.
Evening and weekend gigs still keep them sharp
Performing on flute, saxophone, and harp.

"Doc" Grayson rules the same domain:
One quarter century at 103 West Main.
Redecorating, we now will strive
To reach another twenty-five.
Everything at home and office is computerized.
I resisted, but Dick finally has me organized.
Special interests on which we both agree:
Bio-ethics, writing, and photography.

Your Noel notes and pictures put us in your debt,
So wait! We have not finished with this yet.
We leave you now with deepest wishes
This year even more ambitious:
A world suffused with perfect peace
When hate and wars and sickness cease.

Dick and June Grayson

Oh, sing the song again
To God On High Be Glory
And Peace On Earth To Men

PEACE

SHALOM

PAIX

EPHINH

FREIDE

FRED

SPOKISTO

Christmas 1989

It's Christmas and again it's time
To toast our friends with heartfelt rhyme.
These greeting cards we're now addressing
Give us time to count our blessings:
Four sturdy children, their spouses great,
Precious grandchildren. We now have eight.

Joel Patrick Ream, our latest one,
Janelle and Randy's first-born son,
Came March the Twentieth. We must admit
It's lot of fun to babysit.

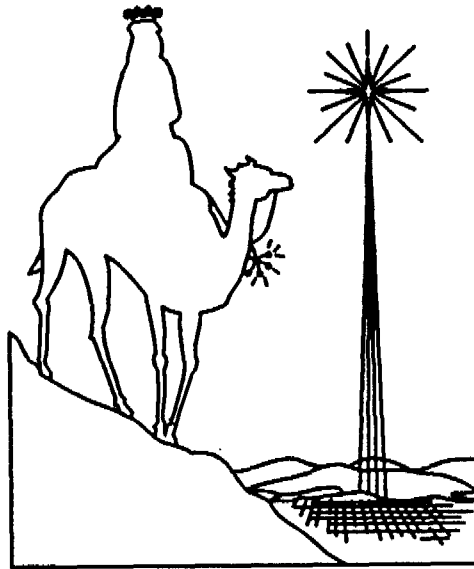
No other babes adorned this year
Unless you count six puppies dear,
Brown Labradors, mom Ginger's pride,
Raised by our Oklahoma Gang of Five:
Rich, Amy, Mary, Gary, Kris.
Fond memories are made of this.

Urbana's home to this small clan:
Paul and David, Carol and Dan.
Champaign is home, and right next door,
For Greg and Becky, Beth and Noah.
So little cousins get to play
Together almost every day.

Dick says to sound the trumpet-call:
He still wins games at racketball!
June writes stories all the weeks
About collectibles and antiques.

We total up our gains and losses.
God sent joys as well as crosses.
So though our world is slightly frayed,
Let's welcome in a new decade.

Dick and June Grayson



Wise men still seek him

*Miracles of healing
God grants
each day anew
We pray that in
this new year
God heals
and blesses
you.*

*Miracles of healing
God grants
each day anew
We pray that in
this new year
God heals and
blesses you*

Christmas 1990

Once a year we send a card
Written by a Grayson bard.
The time to tell the tales
(But leaving out details)
Of family and kin
Has arrived again
Thank God, Amen.

Grandchildren number nine
In nineteen ninety
And eleven are pledged
It is alleged
For ninety one.
If this keeps on
Will there be space
In this place
For every one?
But we don't care
Because we're aware
The Bible says prolific
Is terrific.

Dan and Carol debated,
Begot Paul and David;
Kristi and Gary, not contrary,
Have Richy, Amy and Mary;
Becky and Gregory
Brought Beth accordingly
And Noah discerningly
But April came in March this year
Just to make the riddle clear.
While Janelle and Randy
Have Joel who is dandy.

While the family multiplies
June's writing skill supplies
Freelance comment on antiques
With specialized critiques
For which a hundred editors are grateful
That her Karma is so fateful.



This year June was in a tizzy
Because she was so busy
So she said "You're the poet
But don't know it."
And that is why I, Richard
Am taking the time
To write this rhyme.

Please don't say Humbug to me
We want to wish you a
Merry Christmas,
A Happy Hannukah
And a Happy New Year
All three.

Amen.

Dick and June Grayson

June had this verse posted in her room:

*“But they that wait
upon the Lord
shall renew
their strength;
they shall mount up
with wings as eagles;
they shall run,
and not be weary;
and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

Isaiah 40:31 (The Living Bible)

“If then the God of Israel is this omnipotent Creator and Sovereign, his people never fear that their problems and difficulties are too much for him to handle, or that he is unable to bring their unjust oppressors into judgment (even though Israel's long years of captivity to come might give her that impression). His power to deliver and avenge them is never diminishable through weariness or overstrain. His wisdom in ordering the affairs of men is beyond their comprehension. To his children, who lack both stamina and strength, he liberally grants all they need for their constant progress and spiritual attainment, provided they trustingly wait upon him in expectation and prayer.”

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary

June wrote "Angel Collectibles" during her last hospitalization on a laptop computer in her hospital bed. Dan and Richard arranged for its publication in a magazine on antiques posthumously.

Angel Collectibles

Written and photographed by June Grayson

November 1, 1991

By now there must be almost as many earthly angels as there are heavenly ones, given the zeal of America's angel collectors. Is there any home that does not have at least one angel figurine tucked away in some corner of a cupboard?

Angels have figured in every century and every culture. As God's messengers, angels move between heaven and earth and bridge the gap between God and man. Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism speak of angels in their religious writings.

In some ages, angels are more important players than in others. In Jewish history in the Genesis and Exodus writings, the angel of the Lord guided Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush. The angel of God led the children of Israel after they escaped from Egypt and wandered in the Sinai desert.

For Christians, angel choirs heralded the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Later, an angel announced the resurrection of Jesus and guarded the empty tomb. In all, there are over 400 references to angels in the Bible.

Angels provided the inspiration for much of the stunning Medieval and Renaissance art and literature. Medieval theologians studied angelology, debating esoteric questions such as how many angels could sit on the head of a pin.

Dante's Divine Comedy, around 1320, helped establish the hierarchy of angels into three groupings: 1) seraphim, cherubim, and thrones, 2) dominions, virtues, and powers, and 3) principalities, archangels, and angels (the lowest order). Both Archangels and Angels are messengers. Angels are the guardians of the innocent and the just.

Interest in angels receded with the rise of rationalism and the Scientific Age. Most theologians were embarrassed to talk about angels. If they talked about them at all, it was to agree that angels were only symbolic representations of a spiritual reality.

Now angels are in again, not only for collectors, but also for serious students of religious phenomena. Yet for those people privileged to have been touched by angel wings, no further proof for the existence of angels is necessary.

You don't need to have had an angel experience, however, to enjoy collecting angels. Such collectibles, formerly available only around the Christmas holidays, are now offered in stores and catalogs all year. Collectors who started their angel collections as Christmas items now leave them on display throughout their homes continually.

Antique angel items are scarce. You are not apt to find one of the 18th century German or Italian porcelain figures first made by companies such as Meissen and KPM. Those treasures are in museums or private collections along with altar and nativity figures from the same period.

The angel Gabriel blowing his horn was a popular subject for weather vanes seen atop Early American homes and barns in the 1800s. Current reproductions abound.

Angels were popular design elements during the Victorian Age. Many homes cherished a version of the well-known print of the Guardian Angel, protecting two little children as they crossed a rickety bridge in the dark of night. Another Guardian Angel version was a Staffordshire figurine from England depicting the two first-born children of the popular Queen Victoria. Angel cherubs adorned terra-cotta garden decorations, twined around the borders of silver picture frames, and served as jewelry motifs.

If you come upon a Tiffany stained glass window 24 by 30 inches, call the police. This item was stolen earlier this year from Irreplaceable Artifacts, New York City.

Christmas tree decorations and lights have used angels as designs from the Victorian Age up to the present time. Barbara Agin of New Jersey has more than 1,600 angels for her angel Christmas tree.

The most popular Christmas cards feature angels in their design. Store owners report that other paper products such as angel greeting cards, wrapping paper, and stationery are impossible to keep in stock.

Still, the most popular angel collectibles of all time are versions of the beloved Guardian Angel. Marilynn Webber of Marilynn's Angels by Mail in Riverside, California, cites the Lefton porcelain figurine which comes either with or without a music box as her consistent best seller (see accompanying picture to this article). "People are tired of materialism," Webber thinks. "They hunger for spiritual values."

Some collectors have the discipline to limit themselves to a sub-category of angel items - the Hummels, Lladros, and Precious Moments, for example. However, angels are so appealing in any form - and usually being small, they don't take up much room - that collections numbering in the hundreds and thousands are not at all uncommon. Joyce Berg, featured in the March, 1990, issue of THE SMITHSONIAN, has over 9,500 angels and is still counting. (If you have a bigger collection, please write me in care of this newspaper at once).

I don't know of any reference book yet devoted to angel collectibles alone. You will find them listed individually under other headings in the yearly price guides, Christmas collectibles books, and specific manufacturers' price guides.

Every bookstore has magnificent coffee table books featuring reproductions of angels in art. Every religious book store has both popular and theological treatises on angel lore.

Two angel collector clubs serve angel collectors, and many collectors choose to belong to both of them:

The Angel Collectors Club of America, and Angels of the World, Inc.

Between them, they serve almost 1,000 collectors through regular newsletters and annual meetings. Unlike most collector clubs, but totally in keeping with their interest in angels and all angels represent, these clubs act as charitable service clubs. The national organizations support the Make-A-Wish Foundation, which helps terminally ill children. Local clubs are encouraged to support benevolent projects in their own communities.

Still, I am convinced that there are thousands of additional angel collectors without formal membership in these two clubs. Through their anonymous deeds of loving kindness, perhaps they represent those angels unaware, of whom the Bible speaks, and make this world a better place to live.

Angel Collectibles, continued

*I will not wish these riches
Or the glow of greatness,
But that wheresoe'er thou go,
Some weary heart may gladden at thy smile,
Some weary heart know sunshine for awhile.
And so the years shall leave a track of light,
Like angel footsteps passing through the night.
-Authorunknown.*

June believed the following:

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father, By whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, And I look for the resurrection of the dead; And the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Grayson Family Christmas, 1991

Dear Family and Friends,

As many of you already know, our Mother, June Grayson, whom we all loved, died peacefully on November 9, the result of complications which set in a few days after a seemingly successful coronary bypass surgery.

She always loved life, and she loved what she accomplished during it. Dad brought all of her notes, books and photos to the hospital, together with a new lap top computer: in the week before her surgery she wrote a thousand word article on angel collectibles, with nine photos.

That article appeared this month in the Antique Gazette, and was the last in a series of at least 115 illustrated feature articles written for twenty one newspapers and magazines nationwide. We were all proud of her new and increasingly successful career as a photojournalist, and we know that her success was due to hard work, careful planning, and her natural and pleasant literary style. Undoubtedly, the recipients of this letter will miss that literary style, because she was the author of it these last twenty five years.

The most important thing in her life was always her family. She worked side by side with Dick in his medical practice for many years as his office manager and nurse. We remember her getting up at 6:00 am to work on the books and bills in her study. We all told her to take it easy and not to work so hard, but she seemed not to know the meaning of the word "rest". When Dad managed to put all of that office work onto the computer, she chose photojournalism as a second career that would allow her to travel and to meet people.

She was proud of her children and followed their careers avidly. The birth of each new grandchild was an important event in her life: this year she saw the arrival of two more: James Robert Hestilow was born to Kris and Gary last December 21, and Jacqueline Leigh Ream was born to Janelle and Randy on April 21. We know that she enjoyed seeing her eleven grandchildren grow and develop, and that she loved each one deeply.

She was a church organist, and committed to paper a complete program for her funeral service in St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The order of service was the Vespers service, but with the Venite from the Matins service:

O Come let us worship the Lord, for He is our Maker. Oh come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is His also. The sea is

His, and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Oh, come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

She specified the Nunc Dimittis as Canticle:

Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Here is the homily she chose for Pastor Baerwald's sermon, from Isaiah 30:29.

But for you there shall be songs, as on a night of sacred pilgrimage, your hearts glad, as the hearts of men who walk to the sound of the flute on their way to the Lord's hill, to the rock of Israel.

Mom gives the following instructions about the funeral service.

Mood shall be joyous, full of praise and triumphant, about the beautiful world God made and how it is all in harmony, beginning when even the morning stars sang for joy. (I have the feeling that the most important thing in the universe is the audible and inaudible harmonics.)

The passage from Isaiah is enlarged upon by Mom in an older version of her funeral service as follows.

Pilgrims take with them only what is necessary. They make special provision for their trip. They have a certain goal in mind, and a true pilgrim will allow nothing to deter him from making steady progress toward his goal.

A pilgrim is always a stranger, passing through one land after another, living by values different from those of the people he passes; and yet, in a sense, he possesses the world. A pilgrim is driven by something he believes to be greater than himself, something that draws him like a magnet.

Throughout history, people have made pilgrimages to places they considered holy: Jerusalem, Rome, Mecca, Lourdes, Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela. And when they arrived, they did the things customary for pilgrims to do, and they returned home.

The Bible speaks of us as pilgrims. The one great difference between pilgrims of history and believers is that when we reach our destination, we will be home.

The writer of Hebrews 11:13-16 speaks of Old Testament believers who died in faith:

They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them, the city of the living God. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, for here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

The postlude Mom chose was "Now thank we all our God" (Karg-Elert), and she wanted it to be played with lots of trumpets stops on the organ.

Mom often referred to the following bible passage from Isaiah 40:31.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

We will always miss her, and memories of her will live on in our hearts and minds forever. The pilgrim has reached her destination.

*Alone unto our Father's will
One thought hath reconciled:
That he whose love exceedeth ours
Hath taken home his child.*

We gratefully thank those of you who provided some special help for us during these last few weeks.

The Grayson Family

Dan Grayson
2409 South Vine Street
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Obituary

Monday, November 11, 1991

June Grayson, 66, of St. Charles, died Saturday, Nov. 9, at Delnor-Community Hospital, Geneva.

She was born June 1, 1925, in Fort Dodge, Iowa, the daughter of Gustav Theodore and Emilie Kinne Lind.

She was a registered nurse and full-time office manager for her husband's medical practice in St. Charles. She was an active member of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, St. Charles, where she often was the organist. She had a successful free-lance writer and photographer for the past eight years. Her illustrated feature articles about antiques, collectibles, entrepreneurs, gardening, home life and life styles appeared in 21 magazines and newspapers with occasional photos appearing on the covers. In 1986, she was selected as one of Germaine Monteil's "Non-Stop Achievers."

Surviving are her husband of 42 years, Dr. Richard Roland Grayson of St. Charles; a son, Daniel Richard Grayson of Urbana; three daughters, Kristin Emilie Grayson Hestilow of Oklahoma City, Okla., Rebecca Janelle Grayson Jaxon of Champaign, and Janelle Cecile Grayson Ream of Elburn; 11 grandchildren, Paul and David Grayson, Richard, Amy, Mary and J. Robert Hestilow, Elizabeth, Noah and April Jaxon, and Joel and Jacqueline Ream; her parents, Theodore Lind of Boone, Iowa, and Emilie Lind of Iowa Falls, Iowa; and three sisters, Pauline Alien of Des Moines, Iowa, Karin Elliot of Chicago, and Janice Case of Houston, Texas.

Services will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday at St. Mark's Lutheran Church of St. Charles, the Revs. Roger Leenerts and Reuben Baerwald officiating. Burial will be private in Garfield Cemetery, Campton Township.

Visitation will be 4-7 p.m. Tuesday at the church. Norris Funeral Home, St. Charles, is in charge of arrangements.

A memorial fund in the name of June Grayson has been established at the church.

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