
Hooks - Holland

30 July 2014

The Periodic Newsletter on Family History and Genealogy of
Bennett Hardy Hooks (1890-1929) and Bertha Gertrude Holland (1896-1991)

Issue number 005

The Poetry of Louise Hooks Burchette

Mary Louise Hooks (1913-1991) was the first of four children of Bennett Hardy Hooks and Bertha Holland Hooks. She was 15 years old when her father died, leaving her mother to support the family on the eve of the Great Depression. Louise quit high school after her Junior year and went to work, the 1930 Census showing her living at home and working as a stenographer in a doctor's office.

On 4 September 1930, the 16-year-old Louise married 23-year-old Zebulon Vance Burchette (1906-1985) in Apex, her home town. Vance, as he was called, lived with his parents Zebulon Montgomery Burchette (1875-1941) and Amelia Frances Arrington Burchette (1877-1957) and four siblings, on their family farm in the neighboring town of Holly Springs, NC.

Sometime around the first of the year 1931, Louise became pregnant with their first child, but on 3 June of that year, it was stillborn, after only five months gestation, at Rex Hospital in Raleigh. Three years later, Louise gave birth to Zebulon Vance Burchette, Jr., on 30 April 1934. The 1940 Census lists him as "Vance, Jr.," but everyone called him Z.V.

At the time of the 1940 Census, Louise and Vance were living in St. Mary's Township, Wake County, NC, the area which includes and surrounds the town of Garner, where Vance was listed as a farmer.

Vance died in 1985 at the age of 79, and Louise passed away six years later, on 30 July 1991, at age 77. They are buried in the Mount Moriah Baptist Church cemetery near Garner.



Louise rarely used her first name "Mary," to the extent of crossing it out on one typewritten sheet when someone had listed her entire name. Somewhere along the line, the family shortened "Louise" to "Easy," and to all of us nieces and nephews, she was simply "Aunt Easy."

Louise's Poetry

As far back as I can remember, my mother (Louise's "baby sister") always loved and marveled at Louise's poetry. They were very personal documents, not only an emotional release for her to express the joys and pains of her life, but also an accurate and at times heart-wrenching outside-in look into her heart and soul. Always a very spiritual person who loved her God fervently, many of the poems are direct



prayers containing her intimate needs and petitions. In the last years of her life, after the death of Vance, her output of poems became prolific, and they provide a revealing chronicle of how her final illnesses wracked her body but didn't diminish her art. Several of the poems in the small collection in this newsletter come from that period.

After Louise's death, a collection of literally hundreds of her poems was inherited by her son Z.V. and daughter-in-law Ann. More recently, Ann and her daughter Cindy have unpacked the poems, and they invited me to come and read them. It was a bittersweet experience, and I was at once certain that I needed to share some of them in this format for her family.

MANY THANKS... to Ann Glover Burchette and Cindy Burchette Evans for all of their assistance to me in gathering the materials for this edition of the Hooks-Holland Newsletter, and for granting me permission to share them here.

LIFE GOES ON

Too busy to be the neighbor we should,
 Too selfish to share the joy we could,
 Too careless to count the cost,
 And too late to save souls who are lost.

(April 1951)

Who's Who In Poetry
 Honors
MARY LOUISE BURCHETTE
 For Outstanding Achievement in Poetry
 Won "GOLDEN POET AWARD FOR 1989" for poem:
LIFE GOES ON

Invited For Inclusion
1990
 Signed First Edition

John Campbell
 John Campbell Editor & Publisher

Eddie-Lou Cole
 Eddie-Lou Cole Poetry Editor

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Louise was quite pleased to be informed that her poem *Life Goes On* had won a "Golden Poet Award" for 1989, and that she had been invited to be included in the 1990 edition of *Who's Who in Poetry*. The poem was part of a collection of her poetry that she had prepared for publication. Twelve additional poems from that manuscript on the next two pages.

BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies remind me of little girls,
With party dresses and silky curls,
Who dance and play all day long
And think that life is only a song.

Butterfly, if you could, would you
Let me exchange places and do
My dancing and have my fling
And live my life on the wing?

HOUSEWIFE

I've been so busy today;
Dishes to wash and put away.
Floors to sweep and beds to make,
And, oh, I simply must bake a cake.

There was such a big ironing to be done
But even that can be fun.
I daydreamed as I worked away.
(My, but the clothes smell sweet today.)

What to have for supper tonight;
The way time flies is really a sight.
Yes, I've been so busy today,
But I guess I'm happiest that way.

THANKSGIVING

For the shelter of homes against the storm,
Where hearth fires burn and there's love to warm,
The weary souls of those who roam,
We thank Thee, Lord, for home.

For food we have in plenty each day,
And that we send to others far away,
For those who toil to plant and grow,
We thank Thee, Lord, for making it so.

For freedom of speech and worship, too,
The right to work and play as we do,
Without the fear of the falling bombs' hiss,
We thank Thee, Lord, for this.

For those we love who're fighting for peace
Who're giving their best 'til war shall cease.
And when peace has come again to stay,
We'll still thank Thee, Lord, for every day.

WHY DO I LOVE YOU?

Why do I love you?
Is the question I ask
Myself so many times
When I think of you.

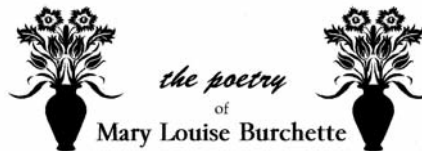
You have a disposition
Of a bear sometimes.
You're cross and cranky,
By your own admission.

Why do I love you?
Perhaps it's because
Underneath your gruff exterior
I see the real you.

I love you because you
Held me close to your heart
And rocked and comforted
Me as no other could do.

I love you because you
Walked with me 'neath
Starlit skies, when moonbeams
Sparkled on the dew.

Then, why do I love you?
Because my life is so entwined
With yours, that for me,
There can only be you.



TO A BRAND NEW SAILOR

So, you want to be a sailor in this war
And uphold the traditions we've always fought for?
That we can live again in freedom and peace
When the world from war can find release.

A courageous, brave heart beats beneath the blue
Or white of your uniform and through
Your veins flows the blood of fighters brave,
Who for ages past have sailed the briny wave.

The Navy and world are proud of men like you
Who'll be doing their share 'til this war is through.
So pitch in and bravely do your part
And help end something you didn't start.

EXIT TO LOVE

Tonight my world's in shambles around me.
My heart is heavy with the leaden weight
Of dreams now dead, yet to me
I still remember days that used to be.

I can't understand what happened to us that
Time could bring such changes.
Where once was love and adoration,
Now there's tears and desolation.

You go your way and I'll go mine.
Perhaps somewhere, somehow, sometime,
You'll remember all the love we shared,
So long ago, when you still cared.

The 13 poems on this page, the previous page, and the next page are from a collection Louise assembled with the hopes of getting them published. There is no indication when the compilation was made, nor whether it was ever formally published. It does, however, include some of her finest works.

HYACINTHS

Hyacinths are such lovely things in bloom,
And their perfumed fragrance fill the room.
Fill, too, my heart with nostalgic memories of a happier day,
When we were very young, and oh! so gay.

The world was ours and it was spring.
We were so much in love that we could sing
And plan for a glorious future together,
Forgetting that life, like spring, sometimes brings stormy weather.

THE HARVEST

The harvest days are here again,
Bringing the fulfillment of a promise
Of abundance and plenty
Of fruit and golden grain.

The apple trees bend low
With the weight of bright,
Red apples, nipped by frost
Are brighter yet in the sun's glow.

The scuppernong vine in the early morn
Sends forth its sweetest smells
And in the distance, still to be gathered,
Awaits row after row of yellow corn.

After spring and summer's rain and sun,
Toil and work from morn 'til night,
The harvest we're reaping is reward enough,
For time and effort of work well done.

'TUNIAS

Our garden was really a beautiful sight.
Everything was coming along just right.
The squash were growing in row after row,
Their height was just an inch or so.

A small boy with chubby hands and a skinned knee,
Wandered to the garden to see what he could see.
Later, he came back, hands outstretched in search of me,
"Look, Mom, here's some 'tunias I brought you, see?"

PRAYER FOR TODAY

Dear God, this world Thou gave to us
Is so filled with hatred and distrust.
Instead of love, we've grown to hate.
Help us now before it's too late.

Out of chaos of war and strife
Help us to build a better life.
We need so much the help from Thee,
For it's Thy hand that holds the key.

FARM BLUES

Oh what a mess the farmers are in.
None of us know just where to begin.
They tell us to plant more and more
And then you can't sell it to the store.

The markets are crazy as they can be
And if you're asking, it seems to me
Instead of the ceiling they're putting on foods,
We'll be lucky if they give us a floor under our goods.

The men who tell us how to farm
Are those who figure it all by moving the arm.
But I'll bet my hat they couldn't milk a cow,
Or know which end of a mule hitched onto a plough.

Oh! We'll all have a headache before we are thru,
But this is one thing we really should do:
Let advisors be farmers for they'll know first hand
Just what it means to wrest a livelihood from the land.

MY SON

Muddy footprints across my floors,
Just tracked in from out of doors.
An empty cookie jar, and as a rule,
You can bet my son is home from school.

His steps lag so when there's work to be done,
But it's a different story when he's having fun.
He's forlorn when the wood box he has to fill,
But he bubbles with joy at a ball game with Bill.

Many a mother who recalls these things today,
About her once small son who's now far away,
Would give the world if just once more,
She could see his muddy footprints on her floor.

A SUMMER STORM



[In a note she appended to the bottom of her manuscript, Louise explained that she had written this in a man's "voice" because it was intended to be read over background music by Jimmy Capps of WPTF on his program "Our Best to You." Capps aired this poem January 27, 1969.]

Tonight there's thunder and lightning, and a summer storm awoke me from my fitful sleep. The waves are pounding against the pier outside the cottage.

I'm remembering another night, another summer storm, when you were here and I was not alone; when with a clap of thunder you reached your arms out to me. I held you close to me, so close and with each flash of lightning through the blinds, you looked so much like a little girl.

Oh, my darling! I miss you so very much. This heart of mine within my breast beats for you alone. My lonely arms long to hold you close again. Here alone where no one sees, my eyes are wet with tears.

After the storm has passed, if I by chance do fall asleep, it will be to dream of you. And my dream will reach out and bring you home again, home to my arms so that I can hold you close again, and kiss away your foolish fears.

I awake, and find that you're not here, the storm has passed, and stars are shining oh! so brightly, it seems I could reach up and pluck one from the heavens. And if I did, I'd wish on that star for your return and I would tuck the star away and when you came back to me, I'd give it to you, a jewel for your shining hair.

AFRICAN VIOLETS

African Violets are much like a beautiful lady, It's shy, and in many cases it says, "Look but don't touch." It requires LOVE for best results, but not too much. They will bring you purple flowers to bloom and bloom.

If once you've raised them to know their ways, Of all their needs, they'll be pretty for many a day. Some may find that before their blooms are through, They'll take your heart more than a beautiful Rose can do.

(July 22, 1988)

EVEN IF MY TALENTS ARE FEW !

When I sit down to write a poem or prose, the words will please
Like the sweet melody of the organ or piano keys.
The music has its own story to tell,
But the message from the words comes through so well.

There's a beauty in writing that I feel and see,
Like an artist's painting has given for me.
I thank the Lord for what little talent He gave,
I want to make good use of it, and its message I'll save.

If there are good things to say to others,
Let me not miss the chance, for aren't we sisters and brothers?
In God's sight we are, whether we are near or far,
In this life here maybe we can be somebody's guiding star.

(January 16, 1990)

WAIT FOR ME, "EASY"

Wait for me, "Easy," don't leave me alone,
For I will be so lost when you're gone.
We've always played and stayed together
Day after day in all kinds of weather.

We built our play houses and played in them.
There was so much pleasure in each whim.
Our dolls were our babies, in make believe,
We didn't want to given them up when we would leave.

Oh! it was fun to be a little girl each day
And in the play houses to play.
Stay with me 'til I'm grown up please,
Then I promise I will give you your release.

(July 6, 1991)

SOFT LITTLE KITTENS

Have you ever watched kittens at play?
They're never still, throughout the day.
They look like soft little balls of fur as they play about,
That they are having fun, we'd never doubt.

I remember long ago, my sister Alma and I,
Both had the "flu," and that is why
We took our little kitten with us to bed, so we wouldn't be alone,
She caught our "flu," but before long her "flu" too was gone.

(February 23, 1990)

SPRING

When I think of spring, it's a season of beauty to see,
With peach and pear trees in bloom, thrill me.
April, sweet April will come back again
Violets and Easter lilies will come after the rain.

Green leaves will be growing on bushes and trees;
The beauty of them surely everyone sees.
There'll be children, and Easter eggs to be found,
In the most unusual places, just all around.

SUMMER

The living is easier and days are filled with things to do.
Somewhere surely there's blooming a rose for you.
Maybe there'll be trips to the beach, a lot of fun.
Everybody enjoys these trips, every one.

When at night you look at the moon light across the Ocean there,
Makes you know there has to be a Heaven somewhere.
Listen to waves pounding up against the shore.
Each visit will be better than the one before.

AUTUMN

When autumn comes with its crisp nights and days,
All over the horizon there's a misty haze.
The leaves that are not yet brown are gold;
It heralds the coming of winter so cold.

Some of the fields are showing their pumpkins and they can be seen
On porches and driveways, when comes Halloween.
The witches and goblins will be there too,
Wishing a happy holiday for you.

WINTER

When winter comes, the nights seem so long,
Help pass the hours away by singing a song.
Some night when it's cloudy and colder, peer out the window;
Coming down softly and silently may be falling some snow.

It may just be a sample of snows to come!
Those times you can make snow cream and eat some.
Each yearly season has a beauty all its own,
But winter is the one time not to be alone.

(August 6, 1990)

OUT FROM MOREHEAD CITY AT MY SISTER'S COTTAGE

In imagination tonight I'll be hearing the waves as they
pound against the shore. Maybe there'll be moonlight
making a pathway across the water, a lullaby to go to
sleep by.

I have some happy memories of our time there at the
Cottage when we were not minus some of us, but
thank God for the blessings of the memories of the
past.

Also those beautiful mornings at day break, sunrise,
the wonderful smell of our breakfast cooking, and with
anticipation of another day's beginning.

There was always something to do; never a dull day.
There was a feeling of closeness not found elsewhere.

I remember your little dog "Bug," when he fell off the
pier, came out of the water, shook himself and was still
ready to go again.

From Emerald Isle the beautiful white yachts passed at
twilight, as lights from across the water on the other
shore shone like stars across the water.

Could there ever be any scene more beautiful? Be
sure there will never be.

(July 3, 1991)

EXCRUCIATING PAIN

Something is dreadfully wrong with me tonight;
Strangely enough it doesn't fill me with fright.
The burden of pain I'm having to bear,
I hurt all over, everywhere.

If this is the Master's call to me,
To take me to heaven and set me free,
I'll welcome the call from Him.
I'm so tired of what this life has been.

If He could take me when I fall asleep tonight,
I know He'd do just what's right.
Good-bye to all who know and love me;
Be glad the Master sets me free.

(May 1991)

*The above two poems were among her last.
She died 30 July 1991.*