

EXCERPT FROM *WINDOWS TO MY SOUL*

Introduction

I was, as a child, moody and emotional. I would often indulge my darkest moments by running away to the hayloft of our barn where the sweet smell of freshly baled hay would fill my nostrils and saturate my senses. There I would float away into the deepest recesses of my soul. If the hayloft was still too close to those I needed to run away from, I would put a halter and rope on my buckskin mare, Golden Arrow, slip onto her back and ride to the nearby woods. Patiently she would listen to me rant and rave at all the insults and transgressions I felt I had endured that day or week. Often I would slide off her warm back into the cool tall grasses. Lying on my back, I would search the passing clouds for familiar and fantastic figures, then roll over to study the grass. My very first attempt at poetic writing was about a blade of grass.



I did not know then, that on those escapes to the woods as I rolled back and forth from cloud gazing to examining a simple blade of grass, I was doing what I would do the rest of my life. In the details of a blade of grass I found my daily and very limited self. There were the dew-drop tears of my easily wounded heart; the sharp and unpolished edges of youth; the flexibility needed to please parental wills; the tenderness of my girlhood; and the lightness of my slight frame easily blown about by the forces of others.

In the clouds I found my dreams and my spirit would fly up to meet those fantastic figures that seemed to magically match my fantasies. As the clouds moved and transfigured themselves, so did I. I imagined myself to have the power to be anything I wanted to be.

Throughout my life, I have alternately sought the perspective and exhilaration of the clouds, of the "big picture," and the reassuring control and manageability that the blade of grass and the attention to detail gives me. I have learned that the "big picture" that becomes one's life is formed from the careful attention to and combining of daily details, even the smallest and most nitty-gritty of them. The jigsaw puzzle of life is put together one piece at a time, one section at a time. From time to time, you must look up to review the big picture – the dream you have for your life – in order to see what part of the puzzle you need to work on next. But then, you must return to the details, to the finding and fitting of each piece, one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, one year at a time.

This book is about the jigsaw puzzle of my life and some of the pieces I have found and fitted into place as I try to complete the big picture. This book also tells of my "secret life" of contemplation and writing. I was born to a very social and athletic family and did my best to mold my shy, introverted nature into a more compatible, extroverted one. College and graduate school in Colorado, Europe, and Utah and then a twenty year career as a psychiatric social worker perpetuated my public image as an outgoing, social and people-oriented person, giving no hint of the recluse who lived within. Thirty years of journals have chronicled that secret inner life and this book takes a first look into those journals.