

A VENT WINDOW VIEW

Another Nice Mess

June 2015-B. K. Showalter

During our December car trip to the Midwest my wife and I visited relatives who reside in that region. We look forward to sharing the December holidays with them. While we were in the area we managed to fit in a two-hour visit with "Lynn," my elder brother. I am glad we had that time together because he died less than a month after we had returned home to Oregon.

Lynn, even though he was just one of my 13 siblings, was something of a role model for me. Of course, during most of our younger years, he considered me a "millstone" around his neck after Mom put him in charge of keeping me out of danger or mischief. Face it! No eleven or twelve year old boy will appreciate having to share his adventures with a five or six year old klutz. Another problem with my mother's ruling was that there were often times when Lynn's ideas led us both into considerable misery. One of his many schemes ended up with both of us making a too close acquaintance with a skunk. With that childhood adventure and many other bits of shared idiocy, one might wonder why we remained close as adults.

I was a college freshman when he was brave or daring or dumb enough to loan me his nearly new '55 Ford. To say I was "tickled pink" would be an understatement! The use of that Ford meant that I was able to enjoy a romantic evening with a gal some 60 miles distant, a lass who would many years later become my wife. (You "car nuts" will understand that I probably remember more about that overdrive-equipped Ford V-8 than about that date!)

With winter snows falling all across our route to Missouri, a trip back for his funeral was not viable. Air travel was equally "iffy," let alone the element of expense involved. Those factors led me to inform the family that we would not try to make the funeral since we had been able to visit with him earlier.

However, on our very next trip three plus months later, we made it a point to visit the cemetery where my brother was interred. Due to the spring-like weather, the little cemetery was kempt and green. The headstone was in place for my brother and his wife who predeceased him. For all the fact that I grew into adulthood less than five miles away, this was my first visit to that cemetery. That it turned out to be the final resting place for many of the folks that once populated the community where I grew up surprised me. In the end, I spent thirty minutes wandering about among the markers to see who was there that I may have known.

The topper to that came as we departed the area; half a mile away, along the route back to the highway, I spotted a dozen or so International pickups from the Thirties and Forties. They were parked next to a barn and a residence, both about to collapse from age.

I am sure the trucks are deteriorating as they appeared to have been parked outside in the weather for who knows how many years. I did not climb the fence to get a closer look, but the machines really seemed to be in decent shape overall. No one appeared to be living in the house nearby, so I did not get any closer to the trucks than the roadside which left me 30 or 40 feet away from the nearest vehicle.

Without my brother Lynn there to encourage me to break the rules and climb the fence, I kept my distance. (Marjorie would have objected to that course of action anyway!)

In the end, still salivating, I returned to our sedan and headed back toward the world of live humans and operational vehicles. Still, as you might have guessed since I am writing about the experience, I am still wondering about those International pickups and will, at some

point, try to find out more about them. In the meantime, I cannot help but remember how my brother Lynn probably would have reacted if faced with such temptation.

And, that's when I remember the old comedies of Laurel and Hardy in which Hardy would roar, "*This is another nice mess you've gotten me into ...* "

Ahhh, Lynn ... except for that darned skunk, I loved almost every one of the messes you got us into!