

SHORT STORIES

by David Plain

Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Memories of a Typical Boy

'Memories of a Typical Boy' is a collection of short stories, snippets really, of my boyhood growing up on Exmouth Street in Sarnia, Ontario, Canada. This short collection also includes two poems.

A Bed Full of Snakes!

David, my mother hollered. Come in now. I want you have have nap. Like any toddler I obeyed while complaining, "I don't want to have a nap. I want to stay outside and play."

"Come and lay down. I'll lay down with you," she pleaded. And so we laid down together on her bed where she dropped off into dreamland. I was not so dutiful. Slipping from the bed and out the house I scurried off to the field where I came across a treasure, a nest of baby garter snakes. Home to the garage I rushed for a six-quart basket. Back to the field hoping all the way they would still be there. They were.

All tangled like a puzzle. You couldn't tell which head belonged to which tail and all wiggling with tongues darting in and out sensing life and all it's dangers.

Quickly I scooped them up filling the woven container. I couldn't wait to get home and share my smashing good find with my mom. I found her still fast asleep.

"Look," I exclaimed as I shoved the basket under her nose! She opened her eyes and screamed. I dropped the basket in the bed. Snakes writhing all about. Some began to slither away in all directions.

"Get them out! Get them out!" she yelled. I began picking them up two and three at a time. Then returned them to their home in the field. Poor mom.

The Chameleon

The young teen's eyes surveyed the poster on the YMCA's bulletin board. "HALLOWEEN COSTUME DANCE!" it said in huge, bold, capital letters. Saturday, October 31st – 8PM. Prizes for the best costumes! I wondered who all would be going? I began to ask my friends at the Wednesday after school sock-hop. "Oh, yes, most answered. It will be a blast!"

The kids at the sock-hop were from the local high-schools. There were even many who attended St. Pats, the only Roman Catholic high-school in the city, defying the standing order from their pre-Vatican II diocese. Their priests had told them they were not allowed to attend functions at the "Y". The acronym, YMCA, stood for Young Men's Christian Association and being a Christian organization that was not Catholic attendance was forbidden. They went to the dances anyway.

"Are you going to the Halloween dance?" I asked my best friend Mary. She was one of the many 'lapsed' Catholics. I had lots of girlfriends, but Mary was the closest.

"Oh yes! But I'm not sure what I'll dress up as. I think it will be something nobody will recognize me in though."

"Me too", I replied.

It wasn't long before Saturday the 31st rolled around. Family dinner was over and I began to get ready for the big event. As I applied each piece of my costume, with my mom's help, my transformation began to take shape. Convincingly, I began to appear what I was not. Finished! At last I was ready and off to the dance.

Oh, the dance went swimmingly, as they used to say. Mary was there as "Little Miss BO-Peep". Most were in costume, but not all. I had many requests to share the dance floor, even to some of the slow tunes like Marty Robin's "A White Sports Coat" and Shirley and Lee's "Let the Good Times Roll". The night was fantastic!

The dance was over at eleven and I was home by midnight. I was in the living room telling my mom how successful the evening had gone... How many boys asked me to dance and how much fun I had fooling everyone!

Just then my big brother Ron came through the front door. He looked at me, but I could tell by his inquisitive look he did not recognize me. So I began to disrobe.

Off came my blouse and I stood there in my bra. His eyes popped open. "What the...!" he exclaimed. I began to take my bra off. Ron turned his head, by looked right back at me with mouth agape. I removed my hair piece. He bust out laughing.

"Gotcha!" I hollered at Ron who was in shock at seeing his little brother in drag.