



Old Homestead - Photo by Paul Long

LITTLE PRAIRIE HOME

Where is the man who built me? Who labored day and night?
Long it's been since he left here, with his children and his wife.

I miss their laughter in the hall, the squeal of children's play;
no more the light of kerosene lamp at the darkened end of day.

I hear no quiet bedtime prayers, no whispered secrets sweet.
Boarded and shuttered and left alone, no one do I meet.

Occasionally through the passing years, as I fall into disrepair,
someone will come and wander here, wondering who it was lived here?

If only they could hear me! What a tale I'd tell -
of love and sorrow, pleasure and pain, of heaven and of hell!

I've seen the bitter struggles, seen tears of joy and pain.
I've heard the sounds of nighttime love, and anguished cries for rain!

Through these broken empty panes, hungry eyes have stared a thousand times,
wondering about the world beyond this quiet country lane,
past all this work and country grime.

I know it wasn't easy, but the children always ate,
and once I had new paint, a picket fence, and wooden garden gate.

Through the years, I've lost some shingles, the porch is torn askew.
Nearby, the well is dry, the windmill too ramshackle to ever turn anew.

The swallows nest up in my eaves, the rabbits in the yard.
The trees they planted long ago still linger, but life for them is hard.

The tumbleweeds roll by my door, the coyote howls nearby
and I am empty and alone, as through me night winds sigh.

My time came and went so quickly - happy family here- then gone to flight.
Little time remains for me, but while I stand,
perhaps someone will see, and then will write!

Will write about the way I sheltered them, kept them safe and warm.
Will tell of my noble efforts to shield them from life's storms!

Perhaps someone will tell of my service - loyal through and through -
when this country was first settled and homes were far and few!