

CARRYING ON

It's been a few weeks now,
But his presence is everywhere.
As the first rays of daylight
Glint through the bedroom curtains,
She wakes and reaches out
To his side of the bed.
It's cold.
Cold as the realization
That he is not there anymore.
His masculine presence is still there,
In every corner of the room,
In every corner of the house.
His clothes and boots
Are still in the cupboard.
The essence of his manly presence
Still hangs in the air,
Reassuringly.
It's everywhere in the house,
Always was, always will be.
From his seat at the kitchen counter
To his tool-box in the car-port.
And his Harley, his pride,
Beside his self-built bike
That took so long to build.
Her mind goes back
To her part-time after-school job
At the local Shell Gas Station.
Hot summer days in tee-shirt
And tight jean shorts.
The roar of a Harley
Pulling up to the pumps.
"Dawn, you have a customer"
Said Bill the Manager.
She raced to the pumps,
"Fill'er up" said the biker.
"And would you like your windows cleaned?"
Said she.

He laughed.
She liked this tough-looking
Curly-headed stranger
With the twinkle in his eye
And a lamb at heart.
"Is there any place a guy can get a beer `round here?"
"Lots of places, well one for sure" said she.
"It's just a little town."
After her shift they went for a hamburger,
Their first meal together.
The first of many.
Then two great reliable and attentive kids,

And more recently a lovely grandchild.
Then a sudden sickness,
Incurable.
Constant visits by caring friends and family,
His passing in the local hospital.
And the largest attendance ever seen
At a funeral service in our Town.
The whole town came to say good-by,
A send-off he well deserved.

Dedicated to my long-term friend Dawn Harilstad and her family, on the passing of her husband, Mel.