

To Jan (9-11-01)

It was in the fall of '50 and little did I know that
I would meet a new girl that was so nifty.
It was in the Avondale show that I first laid my eyes on Jan.
But immediately from the start my head and heart would know
That she was to be in my life's plan.

Jan Thomas was not only good-looking,
But she was also smart.
And even though I hadn't tested her cooking,
I knew she had already captured my heart.
You were young in years and only fourteen, but I recognized
Immediately that I wanted you as my village queen.

Those times at Avondale were great years,
I remember when I played ball
And could always hear Jan's cheers.
Even back in our teens I could count on her grin,
Regardless if it was a loss or a win.

Even after 50 years I can still remember that first date.
It was after homecoming and we were out very late.
It must have been past eleven as we walked holding hands,
It was that special night when you told me...
I was in your life's plans.

I can still sense that night when our lips first met;
I already knew that for my life you would always be my pet.
I used to leave your house and walk down the railroad track;
All I could think of was our love and when I could go back.

My family's house was next to the mill,
And thinking about going up that track still gives me a thrill.
Our three years at AHS were fun,
I couldn't believe in '53 our high school career was done.

*We had some choices to make.
We were planning the future for our sake.
With your great mind I thought
You should continue your education,
But you stately firmly there were more important things
That would require your dedication.*

*I headed out to UGA to play ball,
But I was really worried about school being my downfall.
That freshman year competing was fun,
But all I could think of was You
And when the year would be done.
Academically the 9 months had been barely a start.
I realized very quickly I needed the girl with me
Who had captured my heart.*

*The summer of '54 I had surgery on my knee.
It required a lot of rehabilitation for me.
Also the powers at UGA had a rule,
That we must be married a year to live together at school.
It was in September of '54 that we officially became one,
But it was a long year before
You could join me in Athens for fun.*

*I had a big suitcase with a big G.
I used it to thumb up the road to see thee.
Those trips on 78 West were some times long,
But I knew to be my best,
I had to see my love to keep me strong.*

*The Summer of '55 we moved
To an apartment on Lumpkin Street.
It was great coming home each day with you to meet.
Not many of the athletes had much money,
But I was lucky I had with me my honey.
Do you recall the Spring of '56,
The Mathis Apartment that you kept so neat?
It was around Springtime that you seemed
To always crave a Varsity Treat.*

*Our lives were changing as we watched you grow.
Our responsibilities were to be different as we now know.
It was August 19th that our special gift came into the world.
We knew even then that she would be a very precious little girl.*

*This little one would change our lives in every way.
She made our lives more loving at work or at play.
It didn't take long to know that
Both my girls were important to me,
And with your help, I finally received a degree.*

*Our first job was taken and done with a lot of pep.
I'm sure you recall it was in Lauderdale
That Brenda took her first step.
You two were very agreeable when we left the beach.
We headed home to Georgia to coach and to teach.
The young people thought we were teaching them
To win title and gold, but now they realize they were
Learning other lessons to share in growing old.*

*In November '50, the Lord blessed us in another way.
He gave us a boy with which to love and play.
Brad was unique and a joy in every way.
Why I can close my eyes and still see his smile today.*

*Covington was a unique place even though
We lived in an apartment with not much space.
I was concentrating hard at my task,
But I know it was in March of '62 that you got pregnant
And said it would be your last.
We decided to build a house for our children of three.
I recall each night your stomach seemed to have a lot of play.
Of course back then we didn't know whether it was going to be
A little girl or boy with which to play.*

*I remember clearly that Dr. Calloway laughed that day.
I was shocked to hear what else he had to say.
"Jan, you've got 2 more boys with which Coach can play."
I stormed into the delivery room*

*To make sure there were no more,
I wasn't sure if Jan was awake and able to keep score.*

*You said, "Ronald you're not supposed to be in here today,
But I just wanted to tell you we've
Got enough kids with which to play."
The feeding and changing required all our efforts and more.
With the fact that our children had numbered four,
The lack of sleep was blurring your sight.
I also remember Brenda and Brad saying
It seemed the kids cried all night.*

*It's hard to believe now our children are all grown,
And they are out in the world on their own.
They all have married and have a family of their own,
And I hope they'll teach their young ones right from wrong.
I hope they have learned from you and me,
And with God's blessings they'll be as happy as can be.*

*And now our nest is empty, and we are back on our own,
With 8 grandchildren and some almost grown.
It is hard to believe it's been 51 years since we met,
But we both know God's plans were already set.*

*So today we celebrate 47 years of shared love,
And we both should give our thanks to the One above.
There are not words that I can raise
That are worthy of you in praise.
So here to you is my gift, and I hope it will give you a lift.
I'm giving you 47 Ten's, and I'm trying to continue our trend,
Of letting you know how special you've been.*

*I still love you in every way,
Maybe in 47 more years I'll know more flowery things to say.
Our travels down the path of life have been a lot of joy,
And I hope you'll always remember that...
I'll be forever proud to be your boy.*