Reversion

John Sterling Harris

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My father was born in the mountains of Mexico.
On his fifth birthday in El Paso, Texas,
That was nineteen ought five
He saw his first automobile
And got his first pair of shoes.

At thirteen he drove a six horse span
To break one hundred and sixty acres
Of Alberta prairies grassland for wheat,
Then moved to a college town
With his newly widowed mother
And became a town schoolboy,
And spent his summers breaking horses in Montana.

In college he studied agricultural economics
And played guard in the first football game he ever saw.
He taught school and coached,
And chased mustangs on the desert on weekends.

He became a renowned educator
Running schools with a multi-million dollar budget,
And had a field of black Angus cattle.

At eighty he still sat a horse well on his daily ride
And spoke of the problems and opportunities of youth.
He preached value of hard work and fiscal responsibility.
And the necessity of checking the cinch
Before you put your foot in the stirrup.

—John Sterling Harris

John Sterling Harris is a professor of English at Brigham Young University.