



# *Across the Fence*

By Howard Sherpe

## **Waiting for the Wind**

There's nothing like a cool breeze on a warm summer night, especially after a hot, muggy day. Even on a hot day we could usually count on a breeze at our farm on Coon Prairie. On the down side, that cool summer breeze turned into a bone-chilling, howling, blizzard wind in the winter! But this is summer, and that's a story for another day.

Return with me now to some of those warm, hot, sticky, summer days. Perhaps you are sitting on your front lawn under the shade trees, or sitting and relaxing on the front porch after a long day and praying for cooler weather.

You're waiting for the wind. Waiting for even a slight breeze to cool you off. The air is still. The leaves on the trees are motionless, no movement, no sound. You continue to wait for relief from the stifling heat. The windmill stands silent, silhouetted against the twilight sky, also waiting for the wind.

Fireflies have begun their summer evening ritual of providing entertainment for children. What child hasn't been fascinated by the blinking lights and tried to capture them in a glass jar on a hot summer evening? They're a part of the mystery of life to most of us unscientific types. How can they light up and blink like that? Even in the hot, stillness of the evening you can sit back and enjoy the light show around you. The lack of any breeze doesn't seem to hamper their evening activities.

Your dog slowly ambles to your side and plops down. Wearing a fur coat on a hot, muggy, summer day is not very comfortable. He's anxiously waiting for the cooling wind too.

A long-haired barn cat follows and brushes up against your leg to let you know she's there. It's much too hot to go mousing tonight. The spilled milk in the barn will have to suffice for today. She also is waiting for the wind.

The soft cooing of pigeons can be heard as they settle in for the night in the cupola of the barn. It must be hot for them up there too. Perhaps they're also waiting for the wind.

The frogs have begun their nightly chorus near the pond in the distance. What is it that a frog finds to sing so joyously about on a hot summer day? Ah yes, they can cool off in the mud along the banks of the pond. On days like this, you envy the frogs lying belly deep in the cool mud. Even the dog raises his head and looks at you, as if he knows what you're thinking and wishes he too was a frog. I don't think the frogs are waiting for the wind.

Then you hear it... very faint at first, a soft rustling in distant trees. Slowly, the sound increases as it advances toward you. The leaves in the trees around you begin to stir and flutter. The breeze flowing through the trees, slowly increases in tempo, building, building, louder and louder, like a symphony orchestra pushing toward a crescendo of music, like the cymbal crashing, drum-pounding finale of the 1812 Overture!

The leaves dance among the swaying branches in time to the music, as the cool, soothing sound of the Wind Symphony surrounds you. The windmill that has been patiently waiting for the wind, suddenly springs to life. You hear the creaking sound as the blades begin to turn, slowly at first, and then increasing in tempo as the Wind Symphony takes control.

The dog lying beside you raises his head at the first sound of the wind. Saliva drips from his panting tongue as he eyes the leaves and waits for the breeze to reach him. You see the hair begin to move on his body as the wind washes over it.

Then you feel it too... the wind you've been waiting for. You feel the coolness fanning across your body, rippling like the waves from the ocean, finally crashing against the shore. The only thing missing is the cooling spray from the waves. The wind continues to wash against you and over you... cooling you, soothing you, refreshing you... like a cool drink direct from the windmill that now spins and pumps, creaking and groaning in the wind.

The dog lays his head back down on his paws, closes his eyes, and lets the cool wind flow through his hair. It ripples like the wind flowing through a field of ripe grain. Maybe this is what they really mean by the "dog days of summer!"

You lie back in the cool grass or recline in your chair on the porch and let the wind continue to wash over you as you drink in all the sounds of the wonderful Wind Symphony and life going on around you. The dancing light show of the fireflies increases. In the distance, the frog concert is now in full swing. The cooing pigeons in the cupola sound more content. Your dog lying beside you has quit panting and is now asleep. The cat has curled up next to him, purring and content.

The rushing sound of the wind increases and decreases, increases and decreases, sounding even more like wave after wave crashing against the shore. The waves spill over you, cooling your body and soothing your soul. It was worth waiting for. Life is good!