

I recall many cows lined up in the cattle barn where Dad, Grandpa, and us kids milked them morning and evening. The cream was sold to the creamery, and excess milk was fed to our pigs. The way those pigs slurped that milk up made us laugh. When cousins visited us, milking the cows and feeding those pigs were among the favorite things to do.

THE THRESHERS ARE COMING

Early in the morning we start the day-
The threshers are coming and need to be fed.
Mom, Gram and we girls gather hens from the pen.
“Sorry chicks, there are men to be fed.”

Task of beheading falls to Grandma’s skilled hands.
Hens scalded in water, their feathers to loosen.
Grasping handfuls of feathers, so soggy and limp,
Hens are soon plucked, dressed, and ready for frying.

The wrought-iron skillet on the wood burning range
Soon has chickens sizzling, tempting smells fill the air.
Mom’s fried chicken; a mouth-watering treat!
Then make the gravy for potatoes we’ll mash.

We’ll peel the potatoes, and snap the beans,
Then shuck the corn, fresh from the field.
Slice ripe tomatoes, chop cabbage for slaw,
And cut slices of Mom’s freshly baked bread.

The tea is steeping in the big stone crock.
Add a big ice chunk for a thirst-quenching treat.
The pies were baked yesterday, apple and peach;
Thanks to our orchard, deliciously sweet.

There are basins of water for the men to wash up,
Ready and warmed on the hot concrete walk.
There are soap and towels on the long wash bench,
With combs and a mirror for tidying up.

Stretch out the table as far as it goes,
Set it neatly, in two straight rows.
All’s now ready, and here they come.
Hunger soon quelled. Man what a feed!