

DECEMBER 5, 1974

Holidays are becoming more meaningful. Herders feel blessed on the days when most of the markets are closed. Relief from the price peel-off makes for a celebration. Radio or television isn't so gloomy without quotes on the daily loss in the cattle trade.

Mertzon had a big dance before Thanksgiving. My lodge is two blocks from the Community Center. It was the best band they'd had all year. The bass fiddler was so loud that his short strumming knocked the leaves from the trees in my front yard.

Young people around town continued the serenade after the band stopped. Straight exhausts and screaming tires drove Child Who Sits in the Sun's tomcat underneath our bed. Tom was so upset by the fierce motorcade that he hit a deep rumbled growl. It was the kind of growl that he normally reserves for visiting toms not wandering kids.

I was afraid he was going to awaken my wife. She takes serious offense to interruptions in her rest. Winter before last, I had a bad cough that woke her up. Thank modern society for inventing the rubber pillow. If she'd had that firm a pressure on a feather one, I wouldn't have had as much chance of surviving as an old ewe caught down on the bottom deck of a truck.

TV commercials brag about cough suppressants that'll last four hours. It was four days before I could build the nerve to clear my throat. Folks suffering from asthmatic conditions ought to try a term of marriage in a Indian lodge. They'd be surprised how easy it is to suppress a cough when the next hack may mean a smothering, bed pitching fight for your very life. Cough medicine is no good around my house. All I need is a set of snorkel tubes that'll work on dry land.

About two hours after the dance, our sons started coming home. One of them was carrying his portable tape deck that he uses to fill in from his car tape deck to the one he keeps hot in his room. He has a right snappy drum concert playing for a nightcap. Echoes from the drums lingered on for several hours after he'd gone to bed.

I'd been hoping that the Olympics would add something like musical chairs to their competition. As much music as there is among my sons, they should excel in a musically backed event. I wish saddle leather creaking held them under the same spell. From early in the morning until after midnight, the house is more lie living inside of a juke box than a home.

Thanksgiving dinner was a special occasion. After listening to the reports from the World Food Conference, abundance was an easier blessing to appreciate. Our market and weather failures don't compare to the grief overseas. When you see those squinch eyed kids so hollow bellied that their eyes are oval shaped, \$100 heifers don't seem like the polar axis of the earth's problems.

I think sometimes that I really want to help those people. But anytime my sympathy is aroused, I remember how many ling fasts that my brothers-in-law have broken at my table, and I become more interested in nature than mankind.

Charity wears out fast when you are covered in kinfolks. People shoveling and elbowing for the popcorn bowl ten to confuse what is foreign and what is domestic support. You don't see many foreigners in the Shortgrass Country, so you have to assume that anybody who acts completely alien to the rules of Miss Emily Post must be from out of bounds.

Child Who Sits in the Sun blames me for the way they act. She says that gracious hosts don't try to fill their guests with popcorn before dinner.

I have to disagree. She still thinks popcorn is cheap to buy. No longer than a popcorn fill will last, it ranks right up with sardines and crackers, cost wise.

Our troubles mat last for another year. But we'll adjust to the times. once again the market will start the other way. Even until then, we are the luckiest people upon the earth.