

CW-DT

PMS BUDGET (400)

SIX WHITE HORSES

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BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KALAMAZOO, MICH., NOV. 22 (AP)—THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY THREE YEARS AGO TODAY MEANT SADNESS FOR MILLIONS, BUT TO CANDY GEER, THEN A 16-YEAR-OLD HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, IT MEANT SOMETHING MORE.

FOR CANDY, WHO HAD NEVER WRITTEN ANYTHING BUT A SCHOOL COMPOSITION OR A LETTER, PUT HER SADNESS TO WORDS IN 42-LINE POEM THAT WAS PUBLISHED AND HAS BEEN READ BY THOUSANDS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

CANDY'S A COED NOW, A STUDENT AT WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, BUT SHE REMEMBERS WELL THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER, 1963--PARTICULARLY THE TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE PRESIDENT'S FUNERAL--THAT LED HER TO WRITE THE POEM "SIX WHITE HORSES."

"IT STRUCK ME AS ODD," SHE RECALLS, "THE WAY THE HORSES (THAT DREW KENNEDY'S HEARSE) CAME UP TO THE DOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE. IT WAS SORT OF LIKE THEY WERE CALLING FOR HIM."

CANDY ALSO WAS TAKEN BY THE TELEVISION SHOTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S THEN THREE-YEAR--OLD SON, JOHN. SO SHE WROTE THE POEM THROUGH HIS EYES.

IT READS IN PART:

"SIX WHITE HORSES CAME TODAY/TO TAKE ME DADDY FAR AWAY./  
MOMMY SAID I MUST BE GOOD/AND STAND AS BIG AS DADDY WOULD...

"I HAVE ON A BIG BOY'S SUIT/ AND NOW IT'S MY TURN TO SALUTE./  
I DO IT JUST LIKE BIG BOYS DO/BECAUSE I HAVE TO BE ONE TOO."

CANDY WROTE THE POEM WHILE SITTING BEFORE THE TELEVISION SET IN HER FAMILY'S HOME IN THE DETROIT SUBURB OF GROSSE POINTE. IT TOOK HER HALF AN HOUR.

"I DIDN'T EVEN SHOW IT TO MY MOM," SHE RECALLS. "USUALLY I SHOWED EVERYTHING I WROTE TO MY PARENTS."

A CLASSMATE SAW THE POEM OVER CANDY'S SHOULDER AS SHE RECOPIED IT DURING A FRENCH CLASS THE NEXT DAY. AFTER READING IT, HE PASSED IT ON TO OTHERS IN THE CLASS.

THE ORIGINAL POEM OR HAND-WRITTEN COPIES OF IT WERE PASSED FROM STUDENT TO STUDENT AT GROSSE POINTE HIGH AND FINALLY TO STUDENTS AT OTHER SCHOOLS IN THE AREA UNTIL IT WAS SEEN AND PUBLISHED BY THE GROSSE POINTE NEWS.

THERE IT WAS SPOTTED BY CHARLES MANOS, AN EXECUTIVE OF THE DETROIT EDISON CO.

"I SAW IT IMMEDIATELY AS A BOOK EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SO SHORT," MANOS RECALLS. HE AND A FRIEND FORMED THE M & W QUILL CO. TO PUBLISH IT, SOLD 5,000 COPIES IN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS AND WENT INTO A SECOND PRINTING THAT HAS NOW SOLD MORE THAN 55,000 COPIES.

THE BOOK IS 56 PAGES, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LESLIE BENNET, THEN A STUDENT AT DETROIT'S CASS TECH HIGH WHO WON A SCHOLARSHIP TO THE CLEVELAND SCHOOL OF ART FOR HIS WORK..

WHAT MONEY CANDY HAS MADE--ABOUT \$4,000 ACCORDING TO MANOS-- HAS BEEN PUT IN A TRUST FUND.

"WE DIDN'T MAKE A CENT OURSELVES," SAYS MANOS, "BUT WE BROKE ABOUT EVEN AND IT WAS WORTH IT FOR THE BOOK AND FOR THE EXPERIENCE."

CANDY, PETITE AND DARK HAIRE, HAD NOTHING PUBLISHED SINCE ALTHOUGH SHE HAS TRIED HER HAND AT A BOOK WITH THE GENERAL THEME OF "HOW TO RAISE AND INFLUENCE PARENTS."

HER EXPERIENCE FOR THE TASK IS SHARED WITH TWO BROTHERS, 11 AND 22, AND A FRENCH POODLE NAMED CREPES SUZETTES.

AN ENGLISH MAJOR AT WMU, SHE HOPES TO GO INTO PUBLIC RELATIONS. SHE SAYS SHE READS ALL SHE CAN ABOUT THE LATE PRESIDENT'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY, BUT JACQUELINE KENNEDY WROTE HER AFTER READING "SIX WHITE HORSES."

"SHE THANKED ME FOR WRITING IT," SAYS CANDY.

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