

ICE ON MY FRONT PORCH SWING

By John F. Hall

I have two antique metal milk cans on my front porch. The milk cans were used until the 1920's. The dairy farmers began using five-gallon aluminum milk cans after the 1920's. I don't recall where I found the old metal milk cans. I just knew that I wanted to put them on each side of my front door. I've painted them three times as I changed the color of my window shutters from black, to blue, and then to the final color of brown.



Charles Clevenger wrote a short piece titled "God's Grace." These are his words: "Sometimes I neglect to say 'Thank You Lord.' For the blessings He sends my way. God expects me to be faithful, but sometimes I go astray. Sometimes I assume it's all about me, and I think I can go it alone. But God has a way of waking me up - reminding me He is still on the throne. Sometimes it takes a knock at my heart to remind me that God is in control. That's when I pause

in thanksgiving...for just the knowing -- it is well with my - soul. God truly loves me - it's plain to see, He blesses me in so many ways. His Grace is sufficient - this I know; to Him, each day, I give thankful praise.

Buddy Cannon, Jamey Johnson, and Larry Shell wrote the song "Front Porch Swing Afternoon." These are some of their lyrics: "Sittin' here countin' the cars going by. In an hour must a been one or two. The sheets are flappin' on momma's clothes line. I can hear music from somewhere inside, the faint sound of a Hank Williams tune. I just caught the smell of a blackberry pie, on this old front porch afternoon. And 000 0000 000 feel that breeze blowing. That magnolia showing her blooms, on this old front porch afternoon. That old dog is laying under grandpa's old chair. He ain't looking for nothing to do. And



that tractor is stirrin' up dust over there on this old front porch afternoon. I can see grandma now in her checkered dress, beating a rug with her broom. The clouds are churning coming in from the west, on this old front porch afternoon...".

I planted a magnolia tree back in 2008. The ice storm of 2009 cut it in two. But it grew back. I enjoy seeing its white blooms. Craig Campbell and

Lee Thomas Miller wrote the song "That's Why God Made a Front Porch Swing." These are some of their lyrics: "A young boy needs a place to sit and wait. 'Cause she ain't ever ready for a date. That girl's daddy needs a quiet spot to tell the boy the what's and what not. Someday soon he's gonna bring her home. They'll sit on the swing with the light bulb on. He'll reach in the pocket of his ole blue jeans, pull out a ring, get down on one knee. I step over my ole dog and head to work, put in a full day till my back hurts. As fast as the world goes 'round and 'round, everybody needs a place to slow down. As my tires hit the

gravel drive, the summer's sun's hangin' on for dear life. There's my little angel in her sun dress, sittin' crossed-legged on the wood steps. That's why God made a front porch, put a creak in the screen door... You can hear that bullfrog clear across the creek. A peaceful rain follows a thunderstorm, That's why God made a front porch...". There are bullfrogs in the big pond in front of my house. They are real loud during the summer months, and silent in the winter months because they hibernate deep into the soft mud. During the summer months you can hear them make their calls to attract the female frogs.

The weatherman is calling for freezing rain, sleet, ice, and snow too. The Governor activated the Kentucky National Guard in anticipation of the oncoming ice storm. I canceled the two meetings that I had in Hopkinsville. Memories of the 2009 ice storm came to mind. Cell towers failed to transmit calls after four hours, when their back-up generators ran out of fuel. Utility poles snapped like twigs when the weight of the ice on the power lines forced them to the ground. I had one last trip to make to the grocery store. My wife, Paula wanted two cans of Sweet Sue's Chicken n Dumplings. I went inside and asked a cashier where I could find the cans of dumplings. She was not sure. A young lady in a Murray State jacket said, "I know where they are and I will show you."

I followed her and she went to where the cans are located. We both had on masks and I did not recognize her at first. I asked her if she was a student at Murray State. She told me that she just graduated from Murray State. I told her that I went to Murray State and I love that place. She said, "I love that place too!" We still had on our winter gloves and we gave each other "high fives." The old graduate, for a brief moment, remembered why he loves that school. The young graduate remembering her fond days there too. Both are forever united as alumni.

I checked out and started to go out the door. It's next to the owner's office. Mallory is the owner's name. I saw the girl from Murray State and realized it was Mallory's niece. Mallory was at her desk and the girl was in a chair next to her aunt's desk. I said to the girl: "I meant to tell you - Go Racers." She looked over to her aunt and said: "He went to Murray State." Mallory smiled and said: "I know." I bid them goodbye and drove home. Charlie Williams and Joe Allen wrote the country song "Old Porch Swing." These are their lyrics: "It's hung there on the front porch since this old house was built. It's where the old men Whittle and the women fleece their quilts. It's held four generations through whatever life could bring. That ol' swing, that ol' porch swing. It held a grieving widow when my daddy's daddy died. And now it rocks my children when they close their sleepy eyes. It's where I popped the question with a quarter karat ring. That ol' swing, that ol' porch swing. It's where brother read the letter that sent him off to war. We knew he had to go and fight, but we didn't know what for. When he came home he just sat there and never said a thing. In that swing, that ol' porch swing. It's been there through the sunshine, It's had it's share of rain. Been a witness to some good times, and a like amount of pain. If it could tell it's story, what a Violin could sing. That ol' swing, that ol' porch swing. That ol' swing, that ol' porch swing."

The frozen rain is covering my front porch swing. I'm looking forward to warmer days and spring. For now, the front porch swing is strapped to the two metal milk cans to keep

the swing from hitting the front porch wall. I still give thanks to Christ for all the grace and inspiration that He has given me, when I was sitting on that front porch swing.

John F. Hall

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