

Dear Mr. (Dr., Sir...) Black,

Your article in Super Looper Magazine a couple of months back was very therapeutic for me. It caused me to sort through some difficult thoughts. Being a 3rd generation cattle rancher has its drawbacks and limitations. Buck and Betty Ramsey invited me to have supper with you and Mr. Logsdon in OKC at the Hall of Fame Gathering Mr. Logsdon organized the weekend after the bombing. I was the guy who lost the cowdog.

I was very impressed by your sense of social responsibility as a visible role model and that, unlike so many others, you took that role seriously. You fulfilled that role in my life, at least, when you wrote about your friend Jack, who was stricken with MS. I was diagnosed with it in May of 1997 and have leased out our family ranch with the option to buy, taking care of my parents for the next 20-30 years as well as providing for my wife and 3 kids for an extended time as well. Buck was a dear friend and he helped me immensely in dealing with anger, depression and the general lostness of it all. My health is a lot better than your friend's was and dealing with the uncertainty of it all is where you came in. I have determined to do all I can while I can and not to worry about the future. I want a future without regrets. My new career involves working with a lot of people and I really enjoy it. Helping people is better than pumping sick yearlings or calving heifers. I am qualified to make the judgement for myself. You could be vetting, but instead you are making people's world a better place too. Thanks.

Just finished this poem about my ordeal. Hope it brightens your day. Sunrises are too beautiful to sleep thru' like full-moon rises and I'll try to catch some more of 'em cause you write so well.

Sincerely,

Cactus Jack McCarty

Nightmare? or Knightmount?

I had a dream that changed my all
And woke to hear Another call,
Then "Mirror, mirror on the wall,"
I saw no man that I recall.

With season's changes through the Fall
From Cowboy down to mortal man,
I found new trails and work I can
And chose to live, not ride the pall.

I found new joys in my new place,
Not loving only selfishly,
And riding horses happily,
I swim the mainstream human race.

My sandhill view with sagebrush'd hue
Had lost the touch of mankind's plight.
My feet touch earth, eyes full of light,
And strength and purpose fresh and new.

The tracks once made are fill'd with sand.
A small-scaled storm blew them apart.
And now I draw in human heart
A scene unsketch'd by callous'd hand.

To seek a higher good for all,
To drink the sweet and leave the gall,
And "Mirror, mirror on the wall,
I see a smile that I recall."

*A line in each stanza begins with "And" to honor my friend and mentor, Buck Ramsey who started the title of his book that way knowing that it defied English literary conventions to start a sentence with a conjunction as if to point out that his work is just a continuation of those who had ridden and written before. Thanks, Buck, for letting me ride alongside for a short time. 9/18/1998