

A Rainbow Tomorrow

- *A Story of Alzheimers* -

by Donna Flood

Acknowledgements

This is written to the memory of our beloved Grandpa.

Illustrations are by his wife, Donna Flood.

He went to his rest

February 19, 2016



Come on kids. This is Storytime. It's a story today about rainbows, your Grandpa and me. Listen carefully my little ones.



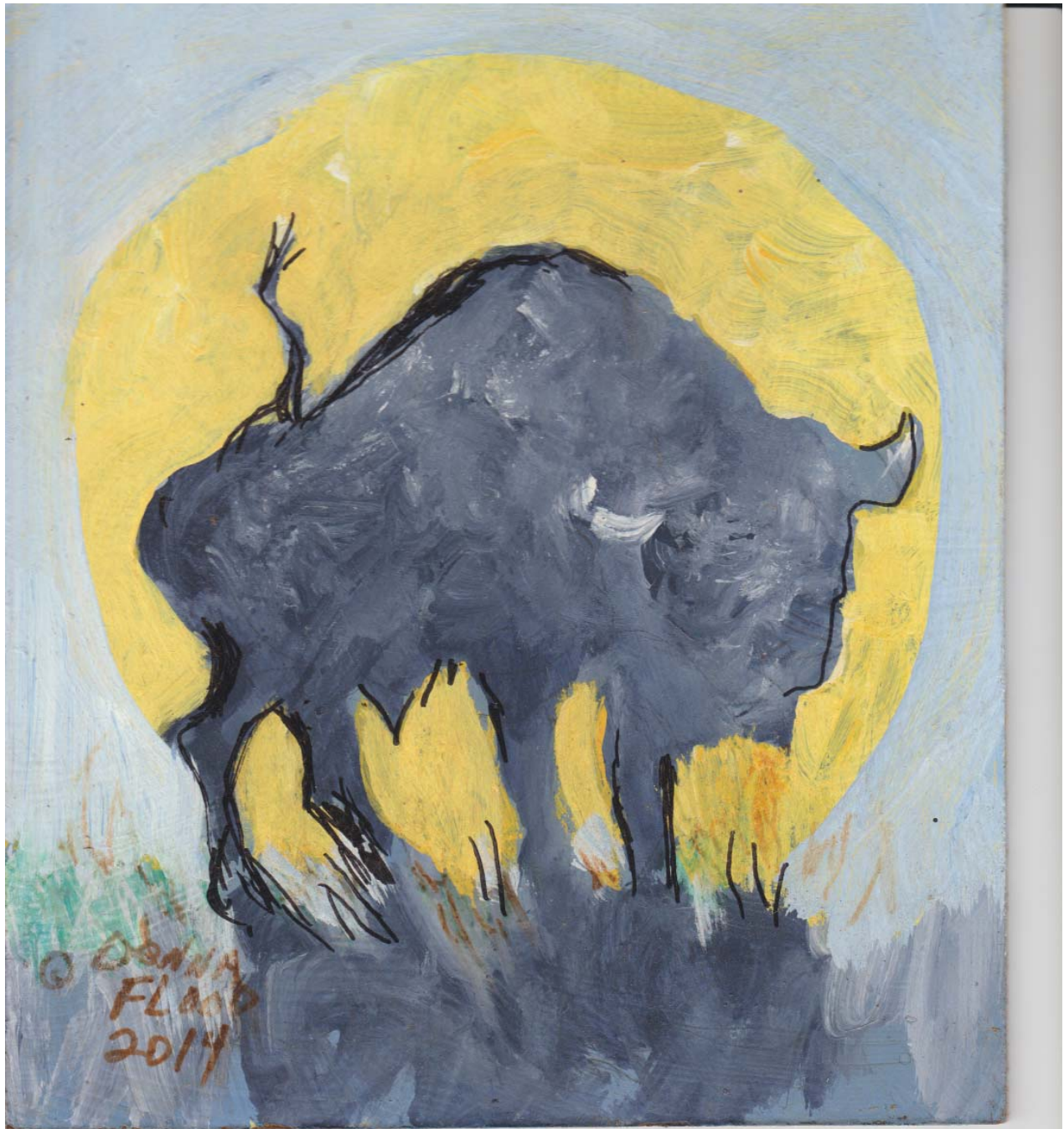
Grandpa has changed because he has an illness called Alzheimers. Now that's a big word. He was always so gentle, kind and loving. Now he is not there for you. My mother told me your Grandpa is childish.

Alzheimers is a bit like a storm. There will be thunder, scary loud rumbles. The rain will blow and pour. Suddenly when all that's over a beautiful rainbow reaches across the sky in a lovely way.

The storm of Alzheimers will not last. The doctor told us it would be one year before Grandpa will have to go. He will rest from Alzheimers.

Sixty years ago Grandpa married me. We moved to the family's ranch home on the Osage prairie. It was a wonderful place to live. The clouds were so beautiful it seemed one could reach up and touch them.

Soft breezes blew and summers were cool. It is only 10 miles from the tallgrass prairie preserve where buffalo roam. We had a great marriage too.



Grandpa always worked. He helped in the hay harvest loading bales of hay in a mighty way. So many folks had hamburgers from his efforts that year. He worked on a ranch and learned to ride a horse. He was sore at night and could hardly walk but it was work.



Grandpa was so smart. We decided to leave our beautiful ranch home so he could go to school at Oklahoma State University. He loved electronics and wanted to learn that.



Our daughter was born while we lived on the prairie. She was just a baby when we left but she always loved to go back.

Some fathers could not face having a disabled child. A mother might have to go on alone to care for their child.

Grandpa was brave as well as kind and gentle. For his whole life he helped care for his daughter who was partially paralyzed. Other men might abandon their child. Grandpa did not.





Grandpa got a job in Dallas, Texas, as an electronic engineer. Dallas had a school for our daughter. She rode a bus there every day. We loved living in Dallas. There was so much to do. Her school gave us free tickets to so many performances.

Grandpa loved his work. He worked very hard with long hours.

We moved away from that beautiful grand city of Dallas where folks were able to reach any goal they wanted.

Home was where our heart lived. Here is a family, good helpful folks. No traffic, freedom in this way.

Grandpa always found work to do. He trimmed trees, did electronic work, repaired organs in far out places, helped build great buildings, had his own electrical company, was an electrical inspector for the City. After he retired he worked in a largely volunteer way for a college.

Grandpa loved to work. He loved people and was a kind, tender man.

As the thunderstorms often do so Grandpa's Alzheimers came. Our calm peaceful home was no more. Like thunder and lightning, we are suddenly frightened.

Grandpa could work no more. He couldn't remember so many things.

He got lost and could not find the way to town. He misplaced keys.

Grandpa in his work climbed ladders for years. Now he falls off a ladder.

Grandson runs for help.



Our family can no longer deny Grandpa was sick with Alzheimers.

So you see we are working together to do everything for Grandpa for as long as we can.

Our Native American family call their old one's orphans. They are like children who have no parents. Children must treat them with much respect and kindness. Their ways go back to childhood. Grandpa is a child in a grown-up body. He does childish things. We are not his parents and should not try to correct him.



Soon Grandpa will not remember your name. Do not be upset when he doesn't know who you are.

There will be a stormy way with Grandpa. He can change from his usual easy going way to someone who becomes very angry. This will be just before he leaves us. Then Grandpa will sleep and rest, all free from Alzheimers.

That's when we will have peace like when you see a rainbow.