Senior Class Poem

Our college life is as a tablet bronze,
Our deeds, though all unworthy, these are graven.
These markings cannot now be chiselled out,
We bear with us only what hath been given.

We've searched untiring, searched and labored hard
For Truth's vast solemn secrets; we are mocked
For still we find her iron gates unbarred,
Eternal Veritas yet all unlocked.

We've only glimpsed the conquest, faintly heard the call,
And how we are to serve, we cannot yet conceive.
Humanity is struggling, our brethren need us all,
We lack only for courage to believe.

We have but caught the gleam, have but begun to seek
The meaning of the ages as they go;
We have but gained the spirit of the meek;
We know only how little we do know.

Montana! at the mountain's crest we pause,
Fearing the laboring valley we can but dimly see;
May this sweet solemn search thou hast inspired,
Now lead us through the haze, uncertainty!

—Evelyn Stephenson.
He halts down the street of the mining camp, too old to brave any longer the dangers of the quest, but loathe to quit the neighborhood where mines and mining are the center of interest. Grizzled, as gray as the rocks among which he has spent the better part of his life, stooped from long bending to hearken to the low voice of Nature and to read her mysterious signs, wearied by the long strife with the elements, and the pursuit of the will-of-the-wisp that leads, not over marshes and bogs, but over towering mountains and down their steep sides to the silent valleys below, with ears a little deaf to the voice of the world, but alert to the magic word "gold," and with eyes a little dimmed, but still keen for the gleam of the precious metal, the old prospector is a lonely figure in any community.

Both the physical and mental weakling is a failure in the prospecting world, for the man who prospects must be able to endure many hardships, and he must be alert to every slightest sign; every word in Nature’s book must have a meaning all its own. He knows when a snowslide is imminent by the way the snowballs roll down the mountain, just as underground he knows he must look for a cave-in when the small rocks begin to dribble down from the roof or sides. Sometimes, when outward signs fail, a voice will call him from the danger-spot. Old prospectors tell strange tales of how they have been called from their work by an apparently familiar voice, how they have found that no one was near, and how they have returned to work to find several tons of rock where they had been standing. The world laughs at these mysterious warnings, but the experienced prospector heeds the calls that save him, whether they came from his own inner consciousness or not. But alertness to danger signals is not all. Every stain on every smallest rock conveys a definite meaning, every spring on the mountain side tells that a vein is somewhere near, every piece of float indicates just about how far it has rolled from the parent lead. As surely as a hound pursues a fox’s trail,
he follows up the outcroppings that seem scarcely more visible than that trail, taking his way so certainly that it seems he must be led by Pallas, as were Homer’s old heroes, on a different quest.

The true prospector has the utmost confidence in this keenness of his, and doubts not that he will strike it rich some day. He is certain that he cannot be wrong in his reading of the ground, and he is quite sure that he can take care of himself perfectly well, thank you. This confidence, however, does not make him feel that, after a quarter of a century of prospecting, he has learned all the ins and outs of his chosen occupation. The young fellow may say, ‘‘I know it all,’’ but not so the prospector, for he realizes that every new formation has its peculiar characteristics, and that he would have to live a dozen lives to get familiar with them all. The nature of ores and their formations is as varied and interesting as human nature and possesses the same interest for the prospector that the mob-mind does for the psychologist.

Perhaps it is this confidence and this fascination that make the prospector so optimistic. First and last he dwells in the sunshine of his dreams, for the prospector is ever a dreamer of rosy-hued dreams. And perhaps it is this dreaming that holds the prospector to his quest. Rude awakenings by danger and disappointment matter not to him—he immediately dreams another and a fairer dream, lulled to sleep by a spell he cannot break. They say the call of the sea is a strong call, and the fever in the blood an undying fever, but there are sailors who have left the sea for the quest of gold, falling under a spell no magic could ever break. The secret of the charm no one can tell. The lure of the gold is strong, but it is not for gold alone that the prospector shoulders his pack and goes forth alone into the silent mountains. Filled with high courage and steadfast confidence the prospector yields to the same promptings that drive men like Amundsen and Shackleton again and again to untrodden lands. Try as he may, the man who has heard the call of gold cannot rest until the last rest, nor do I doubt that even then he goes on hunting for ghost leads in that land of the invisible.

Moral strength is also his to a large extent. It is a sad fact, however, that most prospectors are given to taking riotous vacations between grubstakes. Like the Indian, he is unused to daily contact with the temptations that best the dweller among men, and he falls a victim to liquor as soon as
he leaves for a time the mountains where he has dwelt for so long. It is sel-
dom that the prospector tries to drink and prospect at the same time; when
he does attempt to combine the two, the results are sad indeed.

Even when drinking, the prospector is big-hearted and honest. He has
learned kindness in his long sojourn with Nature, and there are prospectors
who will not needlessly destroy an anthill, much less wantonly kill the wood
creatures that play around his cabin door. He is inclined to be extravagant
when buying for his family or candy for the children, but he is careful not
to burden himself with bulky luxuries when ordering his winter’s grubstake.
Children receive almost too much kindness at his hand and find him gener-
ous to the last degree.

It is perhaps because he remembers his own childhood that he is so con-
siderate of young folks, and perhaps it is this same memory that causes him
to retain enough of his boyhood simplicity to keep him exceptionally clean
morally, though this cannot be said of his housekeeping. To be sure, his lan-
guage would not always pass in refined society, both because of its vigor
and because he uses no grammar. It cannot be said that he delights in break-
ing all the rules of grammar in his endless oral themes about contact, leads,
paystreaks, “faults” and stringers, for the simple reason that he knows of
no rules to break. But the ago-old purity of the snows and streams and rocks
has kept his heart nearly as pure as themselves, and his mind is as full of
ideas all his own as the highland meadows are full of blooms no lowland
dweller ever viewed.

Thoughts of the marvels and mysteries of his high world fills his mind,
and the mountains and the clouds are reflected in his speech as clearly as in
the blue lakes. As the blue lakes are open to the eye that seeks them out,
so is the prospector frank and sincere with anyone who wishes to know him
as he is. He expresses his opinions forcefully, states his likes and dislikes
clearly and calmly, with no attempt to say what his listener would like to
have him say, and has definite ideas about public affairs.

The old-time prospector, with his sturdiness, his mental and moral
strength and weakness, is reluctantly taking his way down the sad path that
leads to a dim yesterday. The new civilization, for whose feet he first upheld
the flickering torch from the heights of the Rockies says he is in the way, as
are all things that have filled their appointed place. He and his shaggy pony
are no longer wanted in the general rush for things new. The prosaic and noisy machine drill have taken the place of his old "single-jack" and hand drill, with their rather musical clink of steel on steel. The trails he painfully cut round the mountain-sides are now shining lines of steel; the mines he left as "open-cuts" are either noisy with modern machinery or deserted and caved in, fitting graves of the prospector's dead hopes; the valleys to which he first wore a narrow trail are vibrant with the hum of a myriad voices, but there is no room for him anywhere. There is no more pathetic figure in history than the old prospector, whose days of daring are past, whose dreams have never fully materialized, who finds no place for himself and his romance, whose old cronies are dying one by one, and whose own sunset is near. The old time prospector may look with scorn upon the modern machinery that is crowding aside the drill and the pick, but he admits in his sad heart of hearts that his day is done. As a type, the prospector has traced his last lead, drilled his last round of holes, and faced the last danger.

The achievements of the prospector, however, do not fade with his passing. By the glow of his enthusiasm he lit the way to the hidden treasures of the earth, and the whole world reflects the glory of his splendid daring. The brilliance of the Great White Way is a silent witness to the man who found the metal used to make the great machinery that tirelessly produces light through the world; the gold that so delights the millionaire's heart as it jangles in his coffers, that is beaten into all manner of ornaments, tells of him whose persistence revealed it; the silver we seek so earnestly, the copper that serves so many uses, the humble iron, without which we would have no strong navy, and manufactures, and no swift transportation; the dozen and one other metals that play so large a part in our world all proclaim the worth of the prospector.

The men who hod enormous fortunes, gathered from the mines, did not themselves find the leads that made them rich. Some poor prospector, wandering among the lonely mountains on his solitary quest, found the rich lead he was sure was there, and, because he had not the money to develop the vein, sold out cheaply, or maybe was cheated out of even the little he asked for his strike by some one already rich enough to do as he pleased. The saying, "it takes money to make money," is nowhere more true than in mining. The prospector, who can no more live on rocks, pure air, and the thrill of
the search than the most pampered society idol can exist on admiration alone, sells out for "a song"; the purchaser, either honestly or dishonestly, makes a liberal fortune out of the mine he acquired so cheaply, because he has the money to wrest from the ground the wealth the prospector can only point out.

It may be said by some that the prospector gets all he deserves. Well, perhaps he does, some day, but not in a material way. In the past he received, perhaps twice in his life, a small sum from some condescending purchaser, who had no more thought of the worth of the man than he had of the value of the metal in the moon. Just now he is looked upon with a half concealed contempt, and allowed out of the way of hurrying progress; he has served the world long and well,

"But now the shadows point to a one-roomed house, a lowly resting place when life is done,

Whose darkly shuttered windows never open to the sun."

His story has been a long one, told with a fascination no one can deny, but the last chapter is being written, and Fate is dipping her pen in the ink of Oblivion to write

"FINIS."

There came a word from yesterday
Through a world of graver matters,
A wanton truant from far away
Like a little, lost child in tatters.
And this is all that it had to say—
Through the gloom of a gray November:
"'Ah, there was once a morn in May—
Remember?'"
Memories may come and memories may go, but I shall never forget my first impressions of the University of Montana.

It was one of those sultry August days peculiar to certain parts of the wheat belt in Southeastern Washington, that I was called from my country newspaper office to receive a telegram from President Craighead with instructions to come to Missoula at once. That was on a Friday—press day. It was oppressively hot out of doors and stifling within the shop. The little fire that was used to melt the lead for the type-setting machine, seemed to radiate additional heat that could be felt in every corner of the office. A few minutes after the afternoon train had arrived and a few additional locals had been picked up, written and set up, the forms were closed and in another few minutes the cylinder press was rumbling as only a country newspaper press can rumble. As soon as the papers began coming from the press the work of mailing was started and it was not until seven o'clock that the last papers were in the postoffice ready for the morning train, the different rural routes and for the ambitious townsmen who came to the office early Saturday morning "for his paper." The following day seemed equally hot and it was not with a feeling of relief that I hopped on that stuffy coach bound for the town which a friend of mine spelled: M-a-z-u-l-a.

The contrast between the previous morning in that little Southeastern Washington town and in Missoula was delightful, especially to him who was in Missoula. The sun was shining and the air was invigorating. The atmosphere was clear and mountains on every side could be seen in all their beauty.

The ride to the University that morning wasuneventful. When I caught my first glimpse of Montana’s largest educational institution, saw Mount Sentinel, glanced at what I afterwards learned was Hell-Gate canyon, I almost imagined that the University was established at the base of this mountain just to be sheltered from whatever winds might come rushing out of that doubtful appearing canyon. But it was not until months later when I was required to cross Higgins’ avenue bridge at an early hour in the morning that I appreciated the possibilities of Hell-Gate.
That Sunday morning visit with President Craighead was my first introduction to an educator who combines all the qualities of a scholar, an executive and an orator.

Ten days passed. I had returned to the country town, made arrangements for leaving, had a short visit at home and was "back on the job." The first few days previous to the opening of college were spent in Room 1 of University hall where Professor Holliday had allowed correspondence for a year to accumulate on an 8 by 3 foot table. I managed to get down to the top of the table on one of the corners and it was there that we began work on the school of journalism. It was in that room that Owsley introduced himself and invited me to the Sigma Chi house. I expressed my regret in not being able to accept his invitation, adding that I held membership in five national fraternities and that I was afraid that I could not afford additional waist-coat decorations. Owsley would never admit whether the joke was on him or on me. Later the journalism faculty was moved into what was really a kennel. Our quarters were entirely inadequate and we appealed to the United States army for tents and in doing so obtained publicity from coast to coast. We existed in that bicycle shed for a few weeks and then moved into our present home.

I shall never forget the first day of registration. I can recall Gregory Powell bolting into the gymnasium, obtaining a half-Nelson hold on Professor Schueh, and greeting him with: "How are you, Prof. old boy."

A few days later I was walking along Higgins avenue when someone yelled: "Hello, Prof." I looked about me for fear that I had been discovered. I had the same experience one noon at the Palace hotel cafe. I was eating alone. Three students came in and greeted me with a loud "Hello, Prof." Once again I took pains to notice who had learned my means of earning a livelihood.

I remember President Craighead's advice to the students. He explained that it was not necessary for a student to be introduced to a faculty member. Students should speak to professors and the opposite was true also. I took particular pains to heed that suggestion and at one time addressed a young lady that I thought was a student but whom I afterwards learned was a clerk at the M. M. Co. I admit that I felt somewhat chagrined but always contended that she really ought to be in college.
Montana still boasts of some of the semi-frontier life which is supposed to be almost extinct. Any person with eyes to see cannot come upon the campus of the University without detecting the influence of the Indian upon even the student. The gay-colored mackinaws and the hats with their feathers pointing in every direction remind one of the red man.

If there is a more democratic state University than the University of Montana, I would not know where to go to find it. Not only are the big majority of the men dependent upon their own resources, but a large number of women are earning their way through college. The spirit of co-operation between faculty members and students at Montana is truly admirable.

The University of Montana is a young institution which is enjoying unusual growth. The standards of excellence maintained throughout the institution are high and are gradually being raised. In athletics, the university reigns supreme. The faculty is unusually competent. There is no possibility that the quality of the work done in the class room will deteriorate. It is probable that we shall have our ups and downs in athletics. That is to be expected. But above all, there is a danger that we shall lose many of the democratic ways that mark us now as a wonderfully progressive institution. As the institution grows, as the student body expands and draws undergraduates and graduates as well, from all parts of the west, we should be alert to keep humble and tolerant. We should be quick to extend a helping hand to the undergraduate who is handicapped financially but is ambitious to obtain a college education. Montana should become famous as a great state university where the ambitious man or woman willing to work faithfully, can receive expert training.

"My Montana" should mean "Your Montana" as well. Upon this campus and amid these truly inspiring surroundings, should be developed a great state university—the most democratic state university in the United States.