

Reflection written by Ann Rich

Hello, dear friends:

I was up most of last night – having fun – looking through my Scrap Boxes (you know, things that never made it into a Scrap Book) and came across a couple of poems written by my grandmother, Mary Constance (Minnie) Nicholson Holmes. I thought you might be interested in reading them.

Also, I was looking for a special “heart” necklace that was given to me back when I was about 7 or 8. You might have heard the story before – (but since this was Granny’s favourite saying, “Oh, well, I’ll tell it again! J)

During World War II every weekend, the Legion Ladies of New Glasgow, N.S. would billet the young British RAF (Royal Air Force) boys, who were training in Debert (about 40 miles away). They provided a communal hot meal on Saturday evening, at “The Hut” – the Canadian Legion building, on Provost St/Trenton Rd. Of course, I had to go with my mother – and obviously, even at age 8, I liked men. (Some things never change! JJ)

Anyway, I took a shine to this young chap (who was probably about 18) and we went for a walk together down Trenton Rd to the Cemetery (one of my favourite places J). His name was “Sparks”, since he was a radio operator. While walking, he sang a song, and we sat on my favourite gravestone (which was shaped like a table, by the way!) and he taught it to me. Of course, when we got back to the Hut – all Hell broke loose! (Since I’d forgotten to tell my mother I was leaving! The ladies were just about to call the Police - [can you imagine this happening nowadays??? There’d be an Amber Alert for sure!]

I’ve never forgotten Sparks or the song. (He gave me one of his badges – a hand holding lightning bolts – and also a heart made out of “airplane glass”we called it “Perspex” or something like that....that I ruined in later years by painting the back of it with red nail polish!) Sadly, I couldn’t find it in my scrap box.

The song was called “Don’t You Ever Cry”. Over the years I’ve asked every Brit that I met if they knew the song...and no one did!!!

Back in 2016, I went “on-line” and found the lyrics to it:

Don't you ever cry.
Don't ever shed a tear,
Don't you ever cry after I'm gone.
Promise me you'll smile,
Darling, all the while,
We'll be back together later on!

Don't you ever cry,
Don't ever worry dear,
Soon each care will be a memory;
Tears are all in vain,
We will love and laugh again,
So don't you ever cry for me!

(Written by Alan Bradbury in 1940) - *the italics are the words I had forgotten.* (Not too bad for about 77 years!)

I spent most of yesterday writing out the music for this piece – and went “on-line” again.....and made a wonderful discovery: It was sung originally by Vera Lynn.....yes, Vera Lynn, the most famous singer during the war years.....and nobody that I asked had ever heard of it!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

So, now I can play AND sing this beautiful song whenever I wish to.

And on that note (pun intended) I'll say 'Bye for now, and let you get back to whatever I've pulled you away from. Have a great day!

Luvya,
Ann

see below,
ENGLAND WILL SURVIVE
Limerick for Ann's 13th birthday

ENGLAND WILL SURVIVE

The Autumn tang is in the air
And winter's in the offing,
The maple leaves have changed their hue,
And soon they will be dropping...
To bud anew another year
That we will wait with pleasure,
And if the world's at peace again
We may sit down in leisure.

But if the war continues still
Into another Fall,
We all must work with might and main
And rally to the call
Of England, and her allies brave
When they in danger be.
Attacked by foe on every side
From land, from air and sea.

Things may look black; she may go down
As if submerged she'd be.
But don't lose heart, she'll rise again
As will the maple tree.
And when the victory we have won,
She'll shine in all her glory,
Although she's bombed from day to day,
She'll live to tell the story.

Mary Constance Holmes - 1940 (This was printed in The Eastern
Chronicle, New Glasgow, NS)

**Limerick for Ann's 13th birthday - by Mary Constance Holmes - March
26, 1949**

On March twenty-six, so it seems,
Ann Nicholson entered her teens.
The presents she got,
Were a wonderful lot,
Of things that ne're entered her dreams.
Now, Ann never learned how to sew
And she never could make a good bow,
So her aunt Betty MacRae
For that special day
Made her doll a lovely trousseau.
The dress it was silken and blue
And the slip, it was beautiful too,
But she missed her chance
When she measured the pants,
For the doll couldn't get her legs through.
For her party she asked in a score
of a dozen kids and perhaps more
And things that were cast
For the repast,
They ate till they could eat no more.

I phoned Granny about 8am to tell her about the doll's outfit (and no, it wasn't a doll to be played with, it just sat on my bed!) She wrote the limerick, mailed it, from the same town (NEW GLASGOW, NS and I received it at 1pm - SAME DAY - PRETTY GOOD POSTAL SERVICE BACK THEN, EH?