

*Long Ago and  
Far Away*





### **A Tennessee Childhood**

I was born and raised in the mountains in Tennessee. The Tennessee mountains are very beautiful, and Tennessee is a beautiful state. I love to go back to my home state and visit often.

I began my formal education at the age of six. During my first year I successfully completed three grade levels: primer, first, and second grades. The following year I completed two additional grade levels: third and fourth grades. Unfortunately, the small school that I attended was forced to close and the children were bussed to the valley. But my father decided that he would not allow his children to be bussed to the valley, and so my education was put on hold while I was forced to help with the chores around the farm.

At the age of sixteen I began to attend school once again. I started in the fifth grade and was promoted to the sixth grade. After completing one month of sixth grade classes, I was forced once again to leave school and work on the family farm.

There was a lot to do on our farm because we produced all of our own food. We grew all of our own vegetables. We grew wheat and corn and processed them to make our own bread. We raised chickens for eggs and poultry, hogs for meat, and cows for milk.

My mother, father, two younger sisters, and I lived with my grandparents. My mother was epileptic and, because of her frequent seizures, needed help raising the children.

My mother and grandmother both passed away when I was around eight years of age. My two sisters and I were left for my father and grandfather to care for. Because I was the oldest, I was forced to take on the responsibility of caring for my two younger sisters. I cooked, cleaned, laundered the clothes, and completed any other household chores that were needed.

As a young teen while doing my chores, feeding the animals, and milking the cows, I would dream of living in a

room in the barn with a clean floor, wallpapered walls, and a bed with a bedspread. I wanted to be on my own with no one to care for but myself.

At nineteen I had no goals in life but to somehow find a way to get on my own. Then a friend of mine asked me to come to Ohio with him for a visit with family. I decided to stay in Ohio and find a job. This job was the thrill of my life. I was finally on my own.

I was laid off work on January 19, 1959, and went to work at Totes, Inc. in May of that year; I worked at this job until October 1966. I then found a better job with the Borden Chemical Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. I worked many different jobs at Borden.

I could have been a supervisor, but due to the lack of education and confidence, I didn't accept that job offer. Upon leaving for retirement at age sixty-two, I was a lead person and ran my department on second shift. I was able to handle people well, and the company was happy with my performance. I did my job well while at Borden Inc. I had one new home built, later sold that home and bought another new brick home on one acre of ground. I still live in this home today.

I was determined to do the best I could in life even if I didn't have a good education. At the age of sixty-four, I decided to start going to school and get a G.E.D. diploma. I am presently working hard to achieve this goal. Also, I am hoping to buy a computer soon and learn how to operate the computer.

Sometimes I still think about my childhood days, and, at times, returning to the beautiful mountains in the state of Tennessee where I was born and raised, but I'm not sure that will ever happen. The state of Ohio has been good to me in many wonderful ways. I will continue to work to achieve all of my goals.

*~ Art Massengill*

**Boyhood Days**

On the banks of the Ohio  
Where I spent my boyhood days,  
A-swimming and a-fishing and  
Riding the steamboat waves.

As I look back on those days  
And the fun that we had then,  
I know we were just happy boys  
Not thinking how soon it would end.

As the years went by,  
We all went our ways.  
I wonder if my buddies  
Ever think about those days

When we were just youngsters,  
Not a care to crowd our minds,  
Just having fun together and  
Having a grand old time.

I left my boyhood home  
Many years ago,  
And sometimes I really miss  
The places that I loved so.

*~ Earl Willford*

### **The Night a P. T. Boat Prowled Lake Erie**

There are many stories that are adrift and unsolved on Lake Erie. A few of them are tall tales, and I'm afraid I would be laughed off the lake even to mention them. Those can be ignored, but some can't.

Not long ago, I slipped down to the library on a mission to the past. As I sifted through the archives of old newspaper clippings looking for a local maritime drama, my eyes locked onto an interesting clipping from the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* dated October 3, 1945. The headline-grabbing story was "War boat sunk off Whiskey Island." As I read the first accounts, it pushed my pulse rate into the red zone and cast a spell on my adrenaline. Most lake stories are worn with time, but what unfolded was one of the lake's more unusual untold episodes. This story has been hibernating somewhere between V.J. Day and Monica. Trying to recall the details through the doorway of my memory is somewhat like looking in the wrong end of a pair of binoculars. With the help of the local library, I will now embark on a voyage back to the fall of 1945.

The sunken man-of-war was an icon of WWII in the Pacific. An eighty-foot "Patrol Torpedo Boat," a.k.a. P.T. Boat, lay on the bottom of the lake about one-quarter mile north of Whiskey Island. Although not visible by land, its dark shadow had been spotted by a pilot departing on a morning flight from Burke Lakefront Airport. The only information available at press time was that the Cleveland Coast Guard was investigating.

Oct. 4, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition...  
"When the U.S. Navy was contacted, they gave no explanation as to the odd occurrence." Or, was it an effort to conceal information? It wasn't long before they had placed the area under tight security.

Oct. 5, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition...  
"Salvage operations are now under way by the U.S. Navy."  
The *Plain Dealer* ran daily articles describing the progress and

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trying to unravel the incident. The news swept across the city as fast as a spring storm crossing the lake.

Oct. 6, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition... "Each day bewildered curiosity seekers gathered at the shoreline." It was as if someone had found the master key to unlock each spectator's imagination. A flood of "ifs" came up with the sun each morning, as excitement ran high on pure speculation. The best theories were hotter than "Betty Grable." The *Plain Dealer* followed up on every clue that seemed logical, and even the illogical ones that seemed interesting, but their efforts to learn the truth were inconclusive.

Oct. 7, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition... "The Navy salvage crew brought a magnificent war machine to the surface." Now wider implications took shape. It was no accident that the P. T. boat was on the bottom. It had been scuttled. This solved the questions of the crew's whereabouts.

Although unverified, the belief was that the boat had been used to run some illegal cargo. Perhaps an attempt had been made to dispose of the evidence by sending the P.T. boat to the deep solace of the lake bottom, but the P.T. took a dive sooner than anticipated before reaching deep water.

Oct. 8, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition... "The P.T. boat was far from being a decrepit old war relic." Powered by three 1350 h.p. Packard gas engines, it was over the edge in the speeds it could obtain at maximum power. Many of the Navy's captains returning from the war stated that riding on a P.T. boat at full force was like holding onto a drunk on ice.

No police or Coast Guard boats on the lake could even come close to the mystic speeds of the P.T. This warrior was in pristine condition, although all of its lights had been removed, and the entire boat had been painted with flat black paint. This gave further credence to the notion that the boat had become a pawn in a high stakes crime.

Oct. 10, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition... "Lieutenant Commander Bruce Campbell, a spokesperson for the Navy's Classified Operational Section in Washington,

D.C., stated the Navy's recorded copy of the P.T.'s mission log shed light on its military career. The Electric Boat Co. of Bayonne, N. J., built Hull Number 621 which had been commissioned in June, 1943. Hull 621 had achieved distinction in war patrols with the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron of the Pacific Fleet." Later, it was returned to the U.S. to be retained for instructional purpose at the Great Lakes Training Center near Chicago. When the Navy checked with the G.L.T.C., they listed the P.T. as "Whereabouts unknown." Could the P.T. have fallen victim to a world of stolen possessions and human ambitions? Found in the boat was an oilskin chart case containing several water soaked charts of the Detroit River. Both the Cleveland Coast Guard and the Cleveland police could only conclude that whatever the high stakes crime had been, it had been carried out by a select group of non-amateurs, who left no margin for errors.

Oct. 25, 1945, *Plain Dealer* Morning Edition... "The Cleveland police believe their investigation has unlocked the puzzle of the P.T. 621." Prior to the early morning discovery, as the rest of the lake slumbered, a major art theft had taken place in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. It occurred at the Art Institute of Windsor located on Victoria Street less than a block from the Detroit River. The Curator of the Institute said several pieces of Renaissance art had been taken during the night with the help of some sophisticated equipment. The art objects were listed as priceless. The Curator indicated clever art pirates looted the paintings from a heavily secured vault. The rare paintings were awaiting shipment back to London, England. In 1940, the paintings had been sent to Canada for safe keeping to avoid possible damage during the air raid blitz on London by the German Luftwaffe. Now owned by a socially prominent London family, the art at one time had been owned by the Duke of Kensington.

There was no doubt that the heist had been carried out by master thieves with an ingenious plan for using the fastest means of maritime travel. Even in the '40s the art world had unscrupulous buyers willing to pay staggering sums



of money to secure priceless treasures for their private sanctuaries. The last mention of the story appeared in the *Plain Dealer* that December. There were no leads on any of the art thieves or any trace of the art cache.

P.T. 621 was returned to the Great Lakes Training Center. With the war finally over and Christmas just days away, the P.T. saga was quickly forgotten. The story had long ago slipped from the headlines. By far it was not the biggest event of 1945, but the mixture of fact and tale fueled people's imaginations. Long locked in time, the old clippings had claimed a lair deep in the chambers of the Port Clinton library. Their silence is still elusive, but possibly the incident may be remembered by a few people in Cleveland.

I had gone in search of a story and accidentally stumbled into a passageway that led to a refuge of another unsolved lake mystery that had vanished with time. I now ask myself, are the winds of the past still searching for the truth of the occurrence? Or have I only disturbed the silence of mere shadows?

~ *Philip H. Edwards*

### Supreme Court of India

The Supreme Court of India is the highest court of justice in our country. Situated in New Delhi, it consists of a Chief Justice and not more than 25 other judges. The Chief Justice and judges are appointed by the President of India. In the appointment of the Chief Justice, the President consults judges of the Supreme Court and High Court, but in the case of appointment of other judges, he always consults the Chief Justice. The judges hold office until the age of 65 years. Ad hoc judges may also be appointed by the Chief Justice for such period as necessary.

To be a judge of the Supreme Court, one must be a citizen of India who has been (a) a Judge of High Court for at least five years, (b) an advocate of a High Court for at least ten years, or (c) a distinguished jurist in the opinion of the President.

Broadly, there are three types of functions of the Supreme Court of India:

*Original jurisdiction:* Only the Supreme Court has the power to decide any dispute between the Government of India and one or more states, or a dispute between two or more states.

*Appellate Jurisdiction:* The Supreme Court decides cases or judgments given by a High Court in the territory of India, whether civil or criminal, if an appeal is made to it in this regard.

*Advisory functions:* The Supreme Court also has certain advisory functions. If at any time a question of public interest arises upon which the President wants to obtain the opinion of the Supreme Court, he can refer the question to the Court. The Court, after giving due consideration, may report to the President its opinion thereof. Even disputes regarding interpretation of treaties, agreements, etc., can be referred to the Supreme Court by the President.

The Supreme Court has the power to punish for contempt of court. It also has the power to review its own

judgments and orders. It hears disputes regarding the election of the President or Vice-President. It orders the enforcement of fundamental rights if they are violated.

The Supreme Court is rightly called the Guardian of our Constitution and the Protector of Liberties of the people.

*~ Mahammed Kutubuddin*

### **My Mountains**

My name is Mildred, but everybody knows me as Milita (mee-lee-tuh). I'm from Otavalo City in the Province of Imbabura in Ecuador, a country in northwestern South America. Ecuador has the Coast, where it's hot and humid; the Sierra, with the beautiful mountains of the Andes, where the climate is warm and cold similar to spring and fall here in Ohio; the Orient, with the jungle and the rainforest; and finally, the Galapagos Islands, with the most unique species in the world.

I grew up in Otavalo City, surrounded by the mountains. The closest to Otavalo is Imbabura Mountain, only 10 minutes from the city. Otavalo is one of the biggest tourist cities of Ecuador, a city rich in handcrafts and folklore. In downtown Otavalo is a statue of the King of the Incas, the brave Ruminahui. Like any city, Otavalo has things for sale every day, but Saturday is a special big sale day with three full markets: one full market of food, another with handcrafted goods, and another with clothes. There's always something for everyone. People like to negotiate, and you can find good bargains.

It's so beautiful to see the high mountains, with the snow on the top, looking down through the clouds to the cities and their people. The mountains are part of us, and we are part of them. I call Imbabura "my mountain." Big, high, and brave, with the shape of a heart, stands the beautiful Imbabura. On the skirt of the mountain are located many towns and cities, as well as a big lake, called San Pablo. When I was a little girl, someone told me a story about the Imbabura Mountain, the Lake San Pablo, and the Lechero, which is the oldest tree in Imbabura. The story goes like this:

*Once there was a big, rich farmer who owned a most beautiful mansion and had parties every weekend. One day a homeless person stopped at the front door of*

*the mansion, asking for something to eat. The owner and his wife refused to help him and treated him unkindly. The homeless person asked for help three times, and the last time the owner and his family treated the homeless person worse than before, so the homeless person told the owner that one day he would die and have to leave all his possessions. As the homeless person left the farm, water began flooding the mansion. The only ones to escape were the owner and his wife, and they ran in different directions. Suddenly their appearance began to change—she became the mountain, and he became the Lechero. He tried to grab her, and that is why the mountain has the shape of a heart. The Imbabura and the Lechero are looking down upon the lake, which was once a big, rich mansion. People say that, when it's a dark night without moon or stars, they can still hear the loud cry of the ones who died on the lake, as well as the rhythmic wind from the Imbabura Mountain to the Lechero tree.*

The Zone of Intag is a beautiful place! I visited Intag many times in the past. My father used to bring my mom, my five brothers and me to the hot pools, the springs coming from the mountains. Behind the hot pools is a big river, clean as a crystal, so that I could count the stones through the water. My father always said that it's good to cool down from the springs to the river, and we did just as my father said. The trips to Intag were a little scary, because the road was only wide enough for one car, and the curves were very close. If a car came in the opposite direction, someone had to go back until they found enough room to pass. It's amazing to be on the top

of the mountain and look down to the tiny little houses of the town.

One of my best memories is when I was 11 years old. After attending girls' school for ten months, it was time for vacation. August and September were the months to enjoy. My Aunt Rebeca was director of the school in Garcia Moreno, which is located deep inside the mountains of Intag. Aunt Rebecca invited me to spend a month of my vacation with her in Garcia Moreno, so we traveled by bus from Otavalo for 3 or 4 hours until the road ended. Then there were horses waiting for us. We spent the next 8 hours on the horses, up and down the hills, passing one and another mountain, over and over, until finally we arrived in Garcia Moreno. The street was just dust. There were no cars, no airplanes, no electricity, no showers, and I thought, "Oh, no! What a vacation!" I guess I was disappointed.

A few days later, I had made new friends, and I began falling in love with this place. Life in Garcia Moreno was so simple, so quiet, and the only melody I could hear at night was from the bugs and frogs. In Garcia Moreno everybody knows everybody. The people were friendly, especially youth and children, and many of them are still my friends. The majority of the houses in Garcia Moreno are constructed with wood. All the food was pure. It was there that I drank, for the first time, fresh milk, warm and bubbly, straight from the cow. The cheese was the most delicious that I had ever eaten. From the tree to my hands were fresh fruits such as papayas, bananas, lemons, and oranges. Also there was watermelon, yucca, and more.

Twenty years have passed, and everything has changed. Now the bus goes all the way to Garcia Moreno, and there are stores, cars, motels, and new people.

I realize how important the mountains are to me, since I have not seen them in so long. When I lived in Ecuador, I never thought too much of the mountains—probably I expected to see them always—but now I'm here in Ohio. We don't have high mountains, and I find myself

missing my mountains in Ecuador. If I ever go back to live in Ecuador I will probably live in Intag, because I love the life there, as well as the simplicity, the peace, and the people.

*~ Milita Stringer*

### Family Memories

When Grandma moved to her favorite house in Burley, Idaho, a house she had always wanted to live in, it was like one of her very last wishes coming true. Her sister had lived in this very same house. Driving by, you would think it was a pink apartment house with two front doors. Grandma always talked about how she loved visiting her sister Ella there. It was a nice house, not big, and all one level, which I'm sure was a plus.

Grandma was 82, but she got along pretty good for her age. Her temperament was that of a younger person. She was high-spirited, noble, determined and strong. I always looked up to her for those qualities. I wish I had half her character and spirit.

I lived with her so I could help out by taking her to doctors and driving her wherever she needed to go. She dressed up for these occasions, with her hair done and a scarf on it to protect it from the Idaho winds. I helped her prepare meals, and in return she taught me the fine art of quilting, and the fine art of how to be a lady.

One day I'll never forget was when Uncle Lee and I saw this plant out front in a small flowerbed, right by one of the front doors. Well, we both knew very well what this plant was, but Grandma would have none of our back talking! She was mad because Uncle Lee wanted to pull out her "tomato plant." She said we needed to leave it alone! I don't recall how long Uncle Lee and Grandma went round and round about this, but it was quite a while. I tried to put my two cents worth in, but Grandma had her mind set--it was a tomato plant. She told us to leave her tomato plant alone, and she went inside, slamming the door. As far as she was concerned, the subject was closed. It didn't matter that we told her it was an illegal plant. Yep, it was a hemp plant! To her, it was a tomato plant. To us, it was TROUBLE!

Uncle Lee and I didn't know quite what to do. We both kind of laughed. Neither one of us could imagine her



facing a troop of policemen, let alone an 82-year-old woman getting arrested for growing marijuana. I didn't want to get blamed for it either, as I was 19. Could you explain this to an officer of law, that your great-grandmother wanted it left there? Could you explain that it was there when we moved into the house? Even worse, could you insist to a police officer "It's just a tomato plant"? Yeah, right! They would have locked us all up and thrown away the key.

I do know that the plant mysteriously disappeared. She was pretty upset about it. Whoever took care of the problem, I'm glad they did!

On the day she passed on, I was one of the last people she thought of as she fell asleep, never to wake up again. At that time, I had moved and was visiting. Nothing spectacular happened that day. It was just normal. She sat and talked to me as I baked several sheets of cookies. I'll never forget the strange look in her eyes as we said good-bye. I gave her a hug, and she gave me a kiss on the forehead, like she had done when I was a little girl. It was like she knew something. She said, "You have the gift. Guard it well." I didn't have any idea what she meant, but she had said this to me once before, when I was nine. The only explanation she gave me was that it ran in the family, that mostly women knew about it, and that I would know when I got older. It would be years later before I realized the extent of her message, although I got a hint of it that same night.

Later that evening, Uncle Lee took her to Rupert, Idaho, to see a fireworks display. At the same time, I was watching TV with my sister and brother-in-law. I remember blurting out to them, "Grandma's gone." They thought I was acting strange, and I couldn't believe I had said it, let alone understand where it had come from. Within a half hour, we got a message that there was an ambulance at Great Grandma Day's. We all ran for the car. We pulled up in time to see the ambulance going down the road and Uncle Lee, standing there.

No words needed to be said. We knew she was gone. We sat on the sidewalk. I looked at where that silly plant was that Grandma called her tomato plant. She had replaced the missing hemp plant with a real tomato plant! I felt an overwhelming urge to laugh and cry, and I did both at the same time. Her last gift to me was laughter and tears, to treasure forever.

*~ Laura Lee Green-Kulcak*

### **A Terrible Day in My Life**

On Sunday, in the summer of 1985, my teacher took all the pupils in my class to the Saigon Zoological Garden in Vietnam. We were the earliest visitors there. While we were walking slowly across a small wooden bridge and looking down at the goldfish underwater, we heard a very strange sound behind us. How horrible it was! A big tiger was running toward us. Nobody could say a word. We ran as fast as our legs would carry us to escape the tiger. After running for a minute, the distance between the tiger and us seemed shorter and shorter. Because I was so afraid, I stumbled over a stone and fell down. I couldn't stand up to continue running away; I just remained lying on the ground.

Less than a minute later, the tiger was standing next to me. I closed my eyes and held my breath. I heard the roar of the tiger. I thought that the tiger would end my life. About thirty seconds went by, but the tiger did nothing to me. Then he began licking my face, my hand. It was a dreadful sensation. My body was wet with sweat. Then, I knew nothing about what was happening to me. I fainted.

I didn't know how many minutes passed by, but I knew that I was still alive. The tiger had stopped licking me. When I collected my wits, I half opened my eyes and I didn't see the tiger. My teacher helped me stand up. I still wondered why the tiger spared me. When my teacher gathered us all together again, she explained that the tiger had broken free from his cage because of the animal keeper's carelessness. After feeding the tiger, he had forgotten to lock the cage. I also learned that the tiger didn't devour me because he had forgotten his natural ability and instinct. The zoo had cooped him up in his cage for fifteen years, and he had no chance to grab other animals as he used to in the jungle.

When I came home and told my mother what happened to me in the zoo, she was very happy because I was safe. The memory of my frightening experience haunts me whenever I think of wild animals. I always thank God for saving my life.

*~ Thuy Nguyen*

### A Love Letter

I was born and grew up on the left bank of the Volga River. Anyone who has experienced the joy of a trip down the river will never forget it. I'm remembering one summer vacation with my young, at that time, parents. It was my first big step from home outside in an unknown world. I fell in love with the beauty of the river.

July-Afternoon-Hot Air-Silence. And you're watching the endless blue sky from the top of a ship.

There were many old churches on the right bank of the river. With their white bodies and gold shining crosses, they were lighthouses in the daytime.

I was walking down the full ship's length to keep observing any churches. When one was gone, I ran to the nose of the ship to meet the next church. Mama said the buildings were places to pray to a God.

Thirty years later, I took another trip up the river. It wasn't a happy time for me. I was destroyed by a divorce, unloved, without a house and a job. I wasn't ready for a new start. But in my losses I found a refreshing happiness. There were churches on the right bank of the river!

I bought a big smoked fish, a big round loaf of rye bread, and a bottle of wine. I ate it all! It was so good.

Now I'm saying my prayers, but not regularly. But I want to believe the river still streams, and in July the ships still make the trip.

*~ Tatyana O'Neill*

### **The Street Beggars**

Thousands of people in many countries live by begging. For centuries in Vietnam, begging for food and money has been a career for old men and women who aren't able to work. Some of them are disabled: blind, lame or without hands and even orphans. They are really poor and homeless. We don't have welfare in Vietnam, and they don't get any help from the government. Nobody takes care of them.

The big cities have some nursing homes and orphanages, but the beggars don't want to live in there. Anyway they don't like to leave their hometown and, furthermore, they like the freedom of living outside. They don't have any choice beyond begging to make a living.

How is the life of the beggars? Every morning when the sun rises, the beggars leave from their dwelling place with a bamboo cane, a begging bowl, and on the shoulder carrying a begging bag. You may see them appear in every town at every corner, in the streets, the bazaars, the bus stations, the gas stations, the post offices, the train stations, the restaurants, the super-markets and even at the pagodas on Buddhist holidays. They beg for food and money from passers-by. Some beggars die of sickness and starvation. Their lives are really pitiful.

Nowadays, there are more beggars and they have many more ways to beg. You may see a child lead a blind man or a woman lead a man without a leg, lost in the Vietnam war. They carry a micro, a guitar, and a battery with them. The child or the woman will sing a song, and the man will play the guitar. After that they beg for some food or some change from the passers-by.

But many men are strong or able men, who could work as well as anyone else. They are lazy men, alcoholics, drug-users, and gamblers. To rouse the charity of others, they pretend to be sick, fake an injury on their arm or their leg and cover it with a full bandage.

Many children don't have the opportunity to go to school. They have to beg all day in the streets. After the begging day the children must bring all the money to their parents who stayed home drinking and gambling. If the children who beg don't have enough money for the parents, they may beat the children like slaves. The children are victims of child abuse.

According to newspaper reporters, in the big cities many babies are "for rent" for begging. In the morning the beggars walk to the corner or the intersection such as an appointment place and receive a baby. The babies have taken some sleeping pills before the beggars hold them, so they won't disturb the beggars. After the day of begging they return the babies to their parents, then they share the money.

Most of the beggars sleep under bridges, in the parks, on the pavements, and under the roof of buildings.

Can you believe that? A group of people in a small village found out it is easier to live upon the charity of other people instead of looking for a job and working hard for a living. They come to the big cities and make a good living by begging. They save their money. After a few years they have enough money and come back to their hometown and build a house.

Some beggars are very rude; they try to force the passers-by to give them money. The beggars curse at the passers-by if they don't give them some change.

In The United States of America, we sometimes see the beggars at the gas stations, in the corners of the town, or at the traffic lights with the board sign "homeless, hungry, will work, ...." I don't think they are as poor as the beggars in other countries. I think they are alcoholics, drug-users, gamblers or they have personal problems.

What do you think about the street beggars?

~ *Quang Minh Cao*

