

**REBA**

**T. Stephen Phillips**

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A tear fell from her cheek onto the dress she called her “white dress” as she quietly hummed the Happy Birthday song, accompanied by the “clickety clack, clickety clack” rhythm of train wheels turning on track. She clutched the shiny black leather covered bible she’d been given by Mrs. Jenkins as she boarded the train in Odessa - the only gift she would have for this birthday. A gray-cloth satchel lay on the wooden bench beside her, holding her only other dress, the “blue dress”, together with a change of socks and undergarments.

She had just closed her eyes to conjure up an image of her mother and father last together when she felt a light tap on her shoulder.

“Pardon me, Miss. Do you mind if I sit across from you?” He was a friendly looking older man, wearing a dark jacket, a vest with reading glasses protruding from one pocket, and a white shirt and maroon bow tie. He had dark hair with a full mustache, much like her father’s.

She said nothing but granted permission with a slight nod, and the man took a seat on the bench facing her.

“You know, there’s a seat farther up that would be more comfortable,” he said, pointing to open seats in the middle of the coach car. He was a frequent passenger on the train, and he knew that the least desirable seats were those at the front and back of the car over the wheels and braking mechanism. She shook her head “no”, and looked down. There was a reason she’d chosen the back seat nearest the trailing car.

“All right then,” he said, extending his hand, “I’m Jim Clarke, from Philadelphia. Who are you?”

"I'm Reba Kelley, from Tennyson, Indiana," she said quietly, raising her hand to clasp his. Her handshake was surprisingly strong. She was a thin girl with shoulder length brown hair and a pretty face, but her reddened eyes and downward gaze signaled that she was troubled. Her plain hand-sewn long-sleeve white cotton dress and above ankle laced shoes betrayed her working class status and reminded him of the dress and shoes commonly worn by the chambermaid who served his Philadelphia family.

"And what brings a young lady like you to be sitting alone in this dusty car of the Missouri Pacific?" Mr. Clarke asked cheerfully. He had a natural curiosity about people and made it a point on each trip to learn about at least one of his fellow passengers.

She paused and quickly wiped another tear from her cheek. "I'm taking my father home," she said quietly.

"Oh. And where is he?" Mr. Clarke asked innocently.

"In the baggage car behind us. He's dead."

Jim Clarke's body stiffened in reaction to Reba's revelation. He said nothing for a few seconds as his mind adjusted to this new information, and he searched for the right next words.

"I'm so sorry," was all he finally said, and after another pause, "Would you like to talk about it, Reba?" he asked respectfully. She shook her head, and silence fell between them, as the Missouri Pacific rolled on through the dry brown Texas countryside on a hot August 1920 Wednesday morning.

As his mind imagined the circumstances which could have brought this young girl on such an awful journey, Mr. Clarke peered, as if he were reading, at the Odessa Daily News that he carried, and Reba turned

pages of her new Bible, both occasionally looking out the window at the oil rigs and Texas longhorn herds which dotted the landscape.

Around noon a smartly dressed porter came down the aisle with a tray of sandwiches and metal cups of water. He stopped before Reba and Jim Clarke and handed each a cup of water. "Cheese sandwich?" he asked, "only a dime." Reba paused, and then pulled from her dress pocket a faded white cotton handkerchief in a corner of which were tied the coins she carried. As the porter and Mr. Clarke watched, she felt the knot of coins to confirm her recollection, shook her head "no", and replaced the handkerchief.

"We'll have two", said Mr. Clarke, matter of factly, and he fished from his vest pocket and handed the porter a quarter with advice to "keep the change". Mr. Clarke handed Reba one of the sandwiches. "Thank you," she said. Mr. Clarke and the porter watched as she lowered her head slightly in silent prayer, and then, together, Reba and Mr. Clarke ate their sandwiches and drank their water with occasional glances one to the other.

It was nearly an hour past lunch when she spoke again. "Thank you again for the sandwich. I was hungry," she said.

"That's quite all right," he replied. "How old are you, Reba?"

"I'm 16 today," she said with a slight smile.

"My," he said, "that's an important birthday. I remember my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I have a daughter who will be 16 in a few months. Do you have brothers and sisters?"

Reba smiled again. "Yes," she said, "a brother, Bob, who's 9. And two sisters, Vuriel, who's 5, and baby Ida Ruth who is only 2. "

“Well, you are the big sister, “ he said, noting the seven year age difference between Reba and her next oldest sibling. “I’m sure they look up to you. You must be a big help to your mother.”

Reba smiled and nodded and grew quiet again.

Another hour passed before Reba next spoke. “Mr. Clarke, may I ask you a question?”

“Of course, Reba” he replied.

Reba pulled from the folds of her bible and handed him a hand written document titled “Certificate of Death”.

“Could you tell me why my father died?” she asked. “The funeral man tried but I couldn’t understand him.”

The certificate bore the signature of Dr. Eugene Patterson, M.D. and indicated that Claude Kelley had died at the Martha Jenkins Boarding Home in Odessa, Texas two days earlier. The informant was identified as the decedent’s daughter, Reba Kelley. The cause of death was reported as “suspected carcinoma.” Reba looked expectantly at Mr. Clarke as he read the document, hoping that he might glean and convey information that would enable her to explain to her mother the cause of her father’s death.

“It appears that your father died of a cancer, Reba,” he said. “Had he been ill for long? And why was he in Texas?”

Jim Clarke’s manner of speaking was comforting, and Reba sensed in him a genuine concern for her. She began to feel at ease in talking with him.

She said that her father had left Indiana for Odessa the previous summer on the promise of good paying work in the Texas oil field. Their family had never been separated, and it had been as hard for her father

to leave his wife and children as it had been for them to see him go. But, the family desperately needed money.

She said that her father had tried many jobs in and around Tennyson, but none had lasted very long. She recounted several of his efforts. He had worked on Edgar Baum's dairy farm for a couple of years but lost that job when, on one very hot summer day, he had forgotten to open a fence gate which allowed the herd access to the water pond, and six cows died from heat stroke.

He had worked at the Squaw Creek Coal Mine but was fired when he refused to go underground one day because of a premonition that disaster awaited - a premonition that proved to be baseless. He had worked with a cross saw cutting timber for the local sawmill, and at a gristmill and in Scales General Store.

"Mother told me that Father was just born under an unlucky star," Reba said. But Reba also said that his misfortunes might have been partly because he sometimes drank too much of the wine he made when the blackberries were ripe.

And, so, she said, when word spread through the community of job opportunities in the Texas oil fields, Claude and her mother, Ellen, agreed that he should give that a try.

And, Claude did secure a job with the Magnolia Oil Company in Odessa as a roughneck working on the floor of a drilling rig. He was paid \$50 each week for a 9 hour, 6 days a week job, a better salary than he had ever earned. Claude sent half of each paycheck to Ellen by way of Western Union, and he used the other half in Odessa for room, board and other necessities, and an occasional drink at the local saloon.

Claude had described life in Odessa through letters that were read by Ellen to the children gathered at their dinner table in Tennyson. He'd

said that his bedroom and bedrooms of three other roughnecks were on the second floor of the Jenkins Boarding House. The men had access to the dining room and sitting room on the first floor. A short distance from the boarding house were two small buildings - the washhouse where buckets of water, soap and towels were kept for the men, and the privy.

Mrs. Jenkins was a good cook, he had said, and provided 6:00 a.m. breakfast and 6:00 p.m. dinner, and she made sandwiches for the men's lunch boxes. She also laundered their work clothes.

Reba said that her father had returned to Tennyson for a short while at the end of May, for Decoration Day. She related how she and her father had gathered a whole washtub full of flowers which they then divided among jars for the graves of family members at Little Zion, Twin, and Skelton cemeteries. "You'll be doing this for me some day," her father had said as they trekked from cemetery to cemetery.

School ended while her father was home, and her 9-year-old brother Bob had accompanied his father back to Odessa for work with him during the summer months. Bob and another boy carried water and hand tools for the workers and did other field tasks suitable for young boys. It was quite an adventure for Bob, Reba said.

Reba talked on. And, as she talked, Jim Clarke understood that Reba needed to tell him about her family and their life together as a way of affirming for herself that the family would remain a viable unit notwithstanding the catastrophic loss of the head of the family.

The family financial circumstance had been such, she said, that the children had to help as they could. Of course, at age 7, her sister Vuriel couldn't do much, and baby Ida Ruth was only 2, but Reba smiled when she talked about the contributions of nine-year old brother Bob. He

had become the family's "fire man" and "rabbit man", she said, titles which Reba had bestowed.

As "fire man", she said that Bob was primarily responsible for seeing to the fuel required for the heating and cooking stoves at home. Behind their small four room house at the edge of town ran railway tracks on which Missouri Pacific locomotives pulled cars carrying West Virginia coal for homes and power plants to the west. The coal cars were stacked high and jolting movements of the cars on track sometimes caused chunks of coal to fall off and onto the roadbed shoulder. Bob's daily task was to walk the track with a bucket, accompanied by their dog Oliver, in search of spilled coal. She said that Oliver had learned to search for coal, and the dog would stand fixed by a piece he had found and signal Bob with a yelp. Often, Bob could fill his bucket in a short distance, she said, but sometimes he had to walk a mile or even farther. A small coal pile in back of the house was maintained through Bob's efforts. Reba said that Bob took pride in his job, and she described him coming into the house, hands and face blackened by coal, with a broad smile if he had filled his bucket.

As "rabbit man", after the first winter freeze, Bob tended box traps which he and his father had set in brush and fencerows along the railroad track. Claude taught Bob how to build and bait the traps, how to remove a rabbit from a trap without getting scratched or bitten, how to dispatch a rabbit with a quick chop behind the head – which Reba demonstrated for Mr. Clarke by a sharp downward strike with the edge of her hand - and how to skin and gut a rabbit. Bob was especially pleased, Reba said, when an evening meal consisted of rabbit that he'd trapped, killed and skinned, and which had been cooked on a stove fired with coal he'd gathered.

Reba's own contributions included housekeeping and laundry and caring for her younger sisters. She also worked with her mother at the Telephone Exchange. The manager of the Exchange was Lillian Deweese, who lived with her husband, Bill, in a two-room apartment above the Exchange office. Lillian, Reba, and Reba's mother juggled three six-hour shifts, between 6:00 a.m. and midnight. The Exchange was down from midnight to 6:00 a.m.

Reba was fascinated by the way in which the telephone system worked, and she explained to Jim Clarke how an operator received an incoming call and by cables connected the calling party to the party called.

Reba had memorized the telephone numbers of the 85 family and business subscribers, and she demonstrated her knowledge for Mr. Clarke by reciting the name and number of the first several subscribers. The town bank number was "one", Paul Gentry's "two", and so on.

A caller could say to the operator, "connect me with number 4," or "connect me with my sister Shirley," and in either case Reba said that she knew exactly where the connecting cable should go.

Reba also told Mr. Clarke about telephone operator ethics. The system was such that the operator could listen to the conversation of the connected parties, and could even join in conversation. But, unless invited to join, the telephone company rule required that the privacy of the callers be respected. Reba confessed she had been tempted to "listen in," but never did. However, because of their chronicling of town gossip, Reba was pretty sure that Lillian and her mother sometimes "listened in".

Reba said that she also occasionally earned money doing odd jobs for Mr. Beale. Shortly into her description of him, it became apparent to Jim Clarke that Mr. Beale was the town curiosity. Reba said that he

weighed more than 350 pounds. He had come to Tennyson in much less corpulent condition, near the end of his working life as a traveling shoe salesman. Tennyson was to have been just another small town stop on his route through Southern Indiana, after the community of DeGonia Springs and before Gentryville.

He arrived in town in a bus-type vehicle, painted red, white and blue to draw attention. The bus had been modified to accommodate his trade. There was only one seat, for the driver. Wooden shelves that were arranged ceiling to floor back to front held his inventory of shoes – both shoes available for take home and samples from which orders were taken and submitted with half payment to the Albert shoe factory in Cincinnati.

Reba said that Mr. Beale could barely maneuver the aisle between the shelves, but the aisle was wide enough for the army cot bed that he put up each evening. An oversize yellowish suit case occupied part of one shelf, holding his entire traveling wardrobe and basic personal items – bars of soap, wash cloth and towel, straight razor and blades, and the few remedies he carried – milk of magnesia, aspirin, mecurochrome. There also was a bottle of prohibition whiskey to which was attached a medicinal liquor prescription which Mr. Beal had obtained from a Gentryville physician in exchange for a pair of brown full grain shoes tanned with beef brain. Mr. Beal also kept a deck of magic cards in the suitcase. He had learned that at slow times he could often draw a crowd with a few card tricks.

Without invitation, Mr. Beale had pulled his bus onto the vacant lot in the center of town near the town pump which provided cool well water to quench a thirst or, for a few families, to supply the entire household need. He leaned his “Beale Shoe Emporium” sign against the bus, and started down the dusty main street to introduce himself. He met

Frieda, the postmistress; Lefty, the blind in one eye filing station operator; Carl, the hardware store proprietor; Ott, the general store merchant; Lowell, the banker; and Check, the barber. He found no competition for his shoes and for that he was thankful. In some communities, he had been encouraged to make a quick exit because of another shoe seller in town. In Tennyson, his only competition was the Sears Roebuck catalog.

When he decided to make Tennyson his permanent home, Mr. Beale rented from Jewel Woolsey a one room apartment in a building adjoining the Telephone Exchange, with a privy in back. He sold his bus to the Free Methodist Church with an option to repurchase after a year, just in case he decided to go on the road again. And, with a year's assured use, Pastor Jones had the bus retrofitted for transporting country parishioners to church on Sunday and the converted and their supporters to baptism in Pigeon Creek.

Mr. Beale settled into semi-retirement and over time liquidated the inventory of shoes that Mrs. Woolsey had permitted him to store in an unused garage. He acquired some tools and found a supplier of soles, and he became handy repairing shoes. The few dollars he earned from shoe repair and interest from his accumulated savings enabled him to handle rent, food and other essentials with a little to spare.

Mr. Beale had a ferocious appetite, Reba said, and being alone, he was frequently the beneficiary of the cooking efforts of the widows and never-marrieds. Pies, cakes, salt pork, cracklings at butcher time. Over the course of a year he had become quite obese.

Because of Mr. Beale's proximity to the Telephone Exchange, Reba and her mother had become acquainted with him. He was often on the stoop outside his apartment working on a shoe repair when Reba came for or left her shift, and they would talk for a while if she had time. Mr.

Beale told Reba of his trips across the Midwest and about places she should see. He told her about the mineral spring with medicinal properties in Degonia Springs where people came to be cured of all manner of maladies. He spoke of the families of dwarfs who lived in Elberfeld for whom Mr. Beale had a steady business of special order shoes. And of the fortuneteller in Mariah Hill who had foretold many of the world disasters. Mr. Beale always had a story for Reba, she said, but soon she noticed inconsistencies in stories retold which made her skeptical of his accounts.

Reba said that Mr. Beale was not tidy. And people wondered how such a big person could live in such a small space. He never had guests, but one March day, he asked Reba if she would help with some "spring cleaning." Subject to her parents' approval, Reba agreed, and Mr. Beale asked her to come by the following Saturday morning.

She said that the one room apartment was even worse than had been speculated. There was barely space enough to move from bed to sink to stove. Stacks of old newspapers and magazines, piles of clothes, a littered card table that served as dining table, and a pump sink filled with dirty dishes. For trash Mr. Beale used a cardboard box from Carl's hardware that was overflowing. Reba would earn the \$2 Mr. Beale had offered for a few hours' work.

For another \$ 2, Mr. Beale had arranged for Johnny Garrison to haul the trash by mule drawn wagon to the public dump west of town.

After she had removed the refuse in sight, Mr. Beale asked Reba to pull things from under his bed. He could no longer kneel for that task. Among the items pulled out was a very moldy pair of blue-toned leather shoes. Reba asked if the shoes should be pitched with the other trash. "Lordy, no," Mr. Beal exclaimed, "them's my summer casuals." Reba chuckled as she mimicked Mr. Beale.

But then Reba grew quiet, and Mr. Clarke saw sadness overtaking her again as she spoke of her father. “He was a good hunter,” she said, “and he took me along.” She described their hunting for quail with Oliver whom she described as a fine bird dog. “He never flushed the birds, until my father gave him the signal,” she said, “and he always found the singles”. And then she described their nighttime frog hunting experiences at Long’s Pond. “The pond was filled with huge bullfrogs,” she said as she spread her arms wide to illustrate the length of the frogs. “I’d hold the carbide light, “ she said, as they circled the pond to locate a bellowing frog. She became good, she said, at finding a frog that lay among weeds in the shallows with his head barely above water. She held the light steady as her father shot the frog with a single shot of his 22 rifle. They usually left the pond with six or eight frogs and skinned them in back of the house near Bob’s coal pile with her siblings looking on. “Frog legs for dinner was a special night,” she said.

She said that her father had never uttered a harsh word to her, not even when she broke the “Lincoln Plate”. “It just slipped from my hands,” she said. Jim Clarke learned that the most significant event in the history of Claude Kelley’s family was the Lincoln dinner. Thomas Lincoln and his family, including son Abraham, lived only a few miles from Tennyson for 14 years, from the future President’s age 7 to 21. Reba said that her father declared that it was during the Indiana period of Abe’s life that he was instilled with the moral code and life principles according to which he governed his life and the life of his country, and that Indiana had better claim to Lincoln than did Kentucky or Illinois.

Claude’s great-great-great-grandfather and his family were members of Little Zion Church, a primitive Regular Baptist church which was a sister church to one attended by the Lincoln family, and the Kelleys and

Lincolns had become acquainted during a combined church Revival held at Little Zion.

And so, on their first night away from home en route to Illinois, the Lincolns had camped near a spring in a field below the Kelley homestead, and Claude's ancestor invited the Lincoln family to take the evening meal with the Kelleys. When Abraham Lincoln became President, the story of that evening and of the meal shared by the Kelleys and Lincolns took on great importance in family lore. The English bone china dishes with gold trim used for the meal became the tangible relics of that evening and had been divided and re-divided among family members as the dishes passed from generation to generation. Just one plate, in perfect condition, had come to Claude, which he displayed in a glass case specially made for the plate.

Tears welled when Reba said that one day in youthful pride she had removed the plate for a school friend who had asked to touch it. The plate slipped from Reba's hands and shattered. She was devastated, and she sobbed as she confessed to her father. "My father said simply, 'the story lives in our hearts and minds, Reba, and we needn't a plate to remind us of it. Besides, I'm quite sure that weren't Abe's plate.'"

Jim Clarke listened intently as Reba talked on. Hers were stories of family and community and love and loyalty and perseverance. He reflected on his Philadelphia life and family. He could lay claim to being mostly self-made by dint of hard work and good decisions. Born to a tailor and a secretary in Philadelphia, educated in public primary and secondary schools, a degree in business from Philadelphia's Pierce College, a stint in commercial banking, and now the owner of a successful business - brokering oil from the Texas oil fields to east coast cities, a job which required frequent travel between Odessa and Philadelphia, Boston and New York. He had married "up," to a

Philadelphia debutante whose life was consumed with managing the staff who cared for them and their home on the Main Line and arranging social engagements for the times when he was in town. Mr. Clarke's estranged son, who had forsaken college and opportunity to join his father in business, had been gone five years, in search of a "more meaningful life," he had said when he left. And his daughter, Agatha, would soon be 16. Her's had been a life of Haverford Day School, piano and ballet classes, summers at camp in the Berkshires, and assured entry into Bryn Mawr College. Jim Clarke couldn't imagine Agatha working at the Telephone Exchange, cleaning Mr. Beale's apartment, handling bullfrogs, or escorting his own dead body.

Reba said that the call about her father had come five days earlier from Henry O'Ryan, field manager of Magnolia Oil Company. The Kelleys didn't have a phone, but Ellen made and took calls at the Exchange, and she was on duty when Mr. O'Ryan called the general number.

Claude had told Ellen during their last telephone conversation that he had a sharp stomach pain. He'd suffered from gallstones in the past and attributed this pain to another episode. He'd planned to see the Company physician if the stones didn't pass in a few days. Mr. O'Ryan's call was dire. Claude had collapsed while working on a rig. He and Bob had been taken back to the Boarding House by co-workers, and Mr. O'Ryan had arranged for an examination by the Company physician. The physician hadn't arrived at a final diagnosis, but he feared it was life threatening. Mr. O'Ryan suggested that Bob return home immediately and that Ellen come to Odessa without delay. He offered to pay their fares.

Ellen was distraught. She agreed that Bob should return as soon as Mr. O'Ryan could arrange travel, and she said that she would call him the next morning about her trip to Odessa.

When she called, Ellen explained that she couldn't leave her two young daughters and that she would have to meet Bob when he arrived. Instead, her daughter, Reba, would come. Reba was nearly 16 and was a strong girl who could deal with adversity. And so, Reba arrived in Odessa three days later. She was met by Mr. O'Ryan at the train station and taken directly to the Boarding House. Claude's condition had worsened. He was in and out of consciousness.

"The Company physician came three times while I was there," said Reba, "but he could do nothing, " and Claude died on the third day after she arrived. Mr. O'Ryan arranged for the services of an undertaker and for transport of Reba and her father's body back to Tennyson.

"To have to deal with death at such a young age must be very hard, Reba," he said.

"I am used to it, Mr. Clarke" she replied. He looked quizzically at her. "That's why my mother sent me to see after my father."

"What do you mean, Reba?" he asked.

Reba pulled up the right sleeve of her dress and turned her arm over. Mr. Clarke saw four scars on the underside of her forearm.

"I had three other sisters and a brother who died," she said. "My sisters died of Whooping Cough and my brother of pneumonia. After they were gone, when I started to forget them, I cut my arm so that I would always be reminded of them."

"Pauline died first. She was only three months old. That's when my mother's mind deserted her. She just gave up and went to bed. I don't think she slept. Her eyes were open, but she didn't speak. She just stared at the ceiling."

“And that’s when my father said, ‘Reba. You have to be mother now.’”  
I was eight.

“Lucy died four days after Pauline. She was three. And then Caroline, a week after Lucy’s death. She was 9, the strongest and able to last longest. I alone survived. I never became sick.”

“Dr. Springstun stayed with us for the entire time, sleeping on the floor alongside my sisters. I helped him and my father, as I could. But, nothing could be done.”

“And then a year later, Cledith was born, but he lived less than a year,” she continued.

Jim Clarke was aghast. In a short period of time, Reba had lost all four of her siblings, three within two weeks. How could she have borne that?

“But, then,” Reba said, “Bob was born and five years later Vuriel and three years after that, baby Ida Ruth.”

Reba said that her mother never fully recovered from the loss of four of her first five children. She was given to periods of depression, not leaving bed for days at a time, and if someone fell ill, she became “crazed,” Reba said.

And so, even if just 16, she was better suited to deal with her father’s illness and to see his body home.

It was mid-afternoon of their second day together, after fitful sleep on the bench seats, more cheese sandwiches bought by Mr. Clarke, and a few relief stops and to take on fuel and water, when the train slowed for the railway station in Tennyson. Jim Clarke repeated his condolence for Reba’s loss of her father, and he expressed admiration for the mature way she was handling her family responsibility. They shook

hands again, and Reba gave him a brief embrace, before she turned to walk through the railway car door and down steps to the platform. Through the train window he saw the group that had gathered.

From Reba's descriptions he recognized her mother, Ellen, who held baby Ida Ruth in her arms. Bob and Vuriel stood on one side of their mother, holding hands. On the other side of Ellen was an older woman, perhaps a grandmother. Behind them an older man sat on the bench seat of a wagon drawn by a dapple-gray horse. Next to the wagon stood three older men, a monster of a man who was surely Mr. Beale, a bespectacled and slightly rotund man whom he guessed to be Doc Springstun, and a tall man with the look of a pastor. Reba ran to her mother and siblings, and they all embraced. The baggage car door slid open, and the simple pine coffin was pushed to the front. Four young local men lifted and moved the coffin from the baggage car to the wagon, and then they hopped aboard the wagon as well. With a call to the horse and slap of the straps, the driver started the horse and the wagon pulled away from the station and up a dusty road, Reba and her family slowly trailing behind on foot.

Mr. Clarke pulled a handkerchief from his jacket and dabbed his eyes. And then he heard the shrill of the train whistle, and with a jolt, the Missouri Pacific jerked forward toward Philadelphia.

## EPILOGUE

Reba was my aunt. Baby Ida Ruth my mother. Reba lost her siblings, saw to her father and brought his body home, cared for the family, and worked in the Telephone Exchange generally as related. Her mother Ellen did not remarry. The family lived in poverty but in a condition of solidarity that carried them through all the difficulties of their lives.

Jim Clarke continued to ride the Missouri Pacific between Odessa and Philadelphia. He always sat on the last bench seat nearest the baggage car, and he looked through the car window for Reba on each passage through Tennyson. Five years after his encounter with Reba, he suffered a fatal heart attack while en route to Odessa, and according to protocol, the engineer stopped the train at the next station for medical treatment for him. He was taken to the only doctor in town who was shocked when Jim Clarke said, "you must be Doc Springstun." As he was dying, Jim Clarke asked for Reba, and she came. "Take me home, Reba" he said to her. And she did.