

Dear Dave,

I've always thought it pretty sweet that my birthday is 4-9-49. This is way too long, but part of my unpublished memoir.

Sincerely,
LoRee Peery

Sent 3/4/08

I'm not old enough to remember the Blizzard of '49, but my generation grew up hearing the tales. Mom tried to forget the bad as she told how she and Dad had only a gallon of peaches to eat during one week. I like to think they lived on love as well.

My entrance into the world came between blizzards in early April of 1949, at the end of a winter of nothing but blizzards. The driveway of our rented farmhouse near Orchard, Nebraska, stretched half a mile from the road, impassable by car or truck. Only the old Oliver tractor could traverse the mountainous snowdrifts and frozen ruts.

Mom's pregnant body was so swollen with toxemia that even Dad's overalls wouldn't fit her. Despite the freezing temperatures, she rode on the back of the tractor the night before I was born, in a dress she had sewn herself. Through the wee hours she endured her contractions, bent forward as the north wind whipped her bare, frostbitten legs.

She's gone now, or I would ask her if a car waited at the end of the drive. Or, did she ride the tractor all the way to Grandpa Mosel's house before the long ride to the hospital in Norfolk? I arrived at 8:20 in the morning on 4-9-49, all six pounds, ten ounces of me.