

The following was written by Rudy to end a piece he wrote for our budding Bible Study Group of which he was part at El Centro College many years ago. In his writing he honestly and warmly shared the goodness that he saw in each of us in the group. In re-reading it I was struck by the love Rudy had for all of us and for himself.

*"I have never quite known how one loves God. It is very hard for me to understand that. But what I think I am feeling more and more is an appreciation for life; an appreciation for a creator that gives me life— with friends like you, my family, and a place to work like El Centro [College]. I sense him more and more. I love Him for that personal revelation. - Rudy*

## An Appreciation for Life from a Tender Man

To know Rudy was to soon discover  
that above all he was a lover  
he would look at you with those penetrating eyes  
he'd nod and listen as if you'd given him a prize.

His love of friends and family filled his heart  
he made you feel like you were part  
of him, as if you somehow snuck inside  
and found a place there to abide.

A friend of ours said that Rudy was a tender man  
who never forgot his roots in the farming lands  
of East Texas where he picked cotton and hauled hay.  
A humble man, Rudy said of himself there really wasn't much to say.

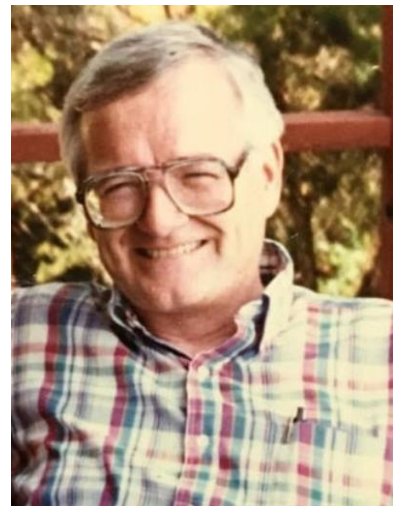
Early on he struggled with little pay  
held many jobs that showed him the way,  
the way good, hard-working people live  
and from them and his kin he learned respect and how to give.

It has been said that Rudy was always there,  
a loyal friend and Brother who cared, unflinching fair.  
And his daughter and beloved wife  
were "his girls," the precious, precious gems of his life.

Yes there was a country boy deep inside  
but his knowledge and interests were very wide,  
a Renaissance man, educated and urbane  
yet uneasy with praise and not prone to be vain.

He was not a "my God/your God" debater  
but he had a simple love for his Creator.  
An appreciation for **life** swelled and flourished in him  
and the abiding light of his gratitude did not dim.

It is said God is love and he who abides in it  
abides in God and God in him. Doesn't that fit  
Rudy who had an enduring slant and bent  
toward Love and took that tilt wherever he went?



And so here we are remembering this giant of a man  
any words I could write or say could not span  
the scope of his tender, merciful spirit, or begin to make whole  
the measure and size of Rudy's beautiful soul.

*Author's Note: Dedicated to Aven Rountree and Lacy Rountree Stanley*

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## **A Few Quotes from Rudy**

*For whatever might have been wrong with the morals, it seems like loving is so much less wrong than all the other "bad" things some people list as no-no's. Least ways there will be a lot of fond memories as we all start the rocking chairs.*

*And at our off-campus facility sometimes called the Green Glass—Boots and Belle and Nitse (or whatever her name was—I couldn't get it straight). Major philosophy was debated there, as good as when authentic philosophers gather, and probably infinitely more fun.*

*"Though nothing can bring back the days of splendor in the grass, we will grieve not, rather find strength in what remains."*

*I have been on a steady road to deeper and deeper contentment.*

*I spent twenty years at El Centro. There were a few down times, but like the saying on the sun dial, "I count none but the sunny hours."*

*I will speak a little of the dead, for it is not likely I can hurt anyone left out. The pain I felt at Jim Hankerson's death was like that of a family member. That classic original was loved by everybody. So many of us have wished we had written down all his special sayings—things like, "rougher than a stucco bathtub." He was my mentor and close friend.*

*... to go to college I worked at many minor jobs: ice cream store soda jerk; janitor at the high school; painter; assistant to librarian; worker at wood factory; furniture mover and farm work among other things. I also borrowed fifty dollars at a time from two bankers, and paid them off slowly. I usually borrowed at the beginning of a semester to pay tuition and get some clothes, and from my odd jobs paid them back.*