

THIS MONTH'S



# FEATURED FICTION

## When Is Poor Poor

from Patricia Rose Gilles

I didn't know that I was poor. I thought that everyone in our family except for dad got only one tiny pork chop for dinner and a smattering of peas and a dollop of mashed potatoes. I thought that it was natural to clean my plate and go away hungry. I thought it was normal to go to bed hungry and to wake up to Cream of Wheat and Oatmeal with lumps in them not that this was poor but we couldn't afford the sugary popular brands which was best for our teeth anyway. We made our lunches for school and it didn't occur to me that I was getting short changed until I sat next to my cousin and she had a thick healthy sandwich and a whole package of Hostess Snowballs and I had a single cookie and one piece of bologna between two pieces of white bread with a little butter and mayo. For fruit I had an apple. Apples were cheap and we always had an apple until the apples ran out and then it was a sandwich and a cookie until the cookies ran out and then it was a sandwich with one piece of meat.

I had a hard time studying because I was hungry. Fortunately they passed out cartons of milk and I got a break since milk was not only a fluid but was a food. It filled my tummy for a little while. Until after school when I was really hungry. I walked home with my cousin who always had money and we would stop at the drug store and she would buy two suckers, one for her and one for me. I was so grateful that they called them "All Day Suckers" because I wanted the sweet hard sticky caramel to last all the rest of the day.

I didn't know we were poor until boxes of used clothes came to our house and we were excited to try them one to see if anything fit. The clothes from my aunt were so pretty that I felt like a princess when one of the dresses fit me. It was the only time that I felt rich in my childhood. At school we collected for the poor food baskets of canned and packed goods. I asked my dad if I could bring something from home and he said yes. So I collected some can goods and brought them to school in a brown paper bag. A few days later a basket of food showed up on our porch. It was then that I knew we were poor.

Patricia Rose Gilles is a freelance writer and poet residing in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. She has been writing for nearly thirty years. Her poetry has been published in many places including LadybugFlights. She has two children a son who is 30 and a daughter, twenty-one. Watch for her book of poems, **Echoes of the Moon Flower**, to be released through LadybugPress this Fall

*This is actually a true story, but has all of the elements of good fiction so we thought you wouldn't mind if we took advantage of this space this month when we have so much to include. ~Georgia*