

Beckie and I

Still here. Life kept turning

Each year thought would be
Last year

Of our lives

Kind of hard when we had
No mother or father

No home to come back to

Nothing to know about
Family history

Who were these people

What happened to Grand ma
Who was Grand pa

Well, we ended up taking care
Of our selves

Looking out for each other
Making our own family

From scraps and pieces

Left over from the war

Little sister remembers homecoming

By Beckie Querio of Joliet

My favorite Christmas was in 1963 when I was 11 years old.

My only brother Mike had been gone for what seemed to me forever. He was in basic training at Camp Pendleton, Calif.

I thought my big brother was the best thing since sliced bread. He taught me how to swim and do the latest dance — The Twist. He was the Twist Champion of Illinois. He even let me stay up late and watch the "Twilight Zone" with him — much to my parents' horror!

I was the only kid in grade school who knew who Bob Dylan was. That's because Mike let me listen to his folk music.

When his older friends came over, he never shoved me out of the way and out of sight as most older brothers with kid sisters would have done. On the contrary, my brother's friends were always nice to me. Mike wouldn't have it any other way.

Well, there I was in Bushnell in December 1963. There was talk that Mike would be home sometime, but the grown-ups didn't feel the need to tell me exactly when.

I can remember hurrying home under a pitch black sky. Snow had started to fall. I ran up the stairs of our apartment and bounced into the dining room.

My brother's duffel bags and various luggage were scattered across the floor. He was home! Joyfully, I ran through the house — but no Mike.

I ran outside again. The snow was falling softly to the ground. A car came down the street and stopped. Out jumped Mike. We ran to each other and hugged in the



Beckie Querio always adored her older brother Mike, as evidenced by this family snapshot.

middle of the street.

His big hug made me feel so secure that night. I don't know if any hug since then has made me feel that way. Maybe hugs are just different when you're 11.

That was our last Christmas together. The war in Vietnam separated us the next Christmas and my brother's torment separated us when the war no longer did.

My brother lives in New Mexico now and is at peace. But, I wonder if he remembers a Christmas long ago and the little girl he left behind?



FINALLY MADE IT TO YANKEE STADIUM
Was it big

Was it the biggest YES

Saw the Detroit Tigers
Play the Yankees

Second time this years
Seen the TigerS Go

Loved Tony the Tiger, also

Was up for Detroit

Want to see Detroit in Detroit

This is the year wanted to see

Detroit doing well

Well, Yankee stadium was big
Detroit is important



Vermont is mountains and valleys

Going through the state

More up and down than across

Stretch out the whole place

And what do we have

Well, place big as New Mexico

And green

Green everywhere

All the way to bottom of canyon

Where big river runs



Upstate New York

Was just like veterans

Like veterans who I meet

In other high northern states

Michigan and Vermont

Something about living

High north

Seems to make people different

Are people different because

Land is different

Northern mountain people

Finally passed Peer Specialist Test
Thought about past two years
Waiting to have someone offer me
The chance, the class, the test
Let hanging from that time in Boston
Failed on the test, never allowed to see
Test or results
Never allowed to take exam, again
Whispered and discredited behind my back

“Well, you know he doesn't know what
He is talking about.
He can't even pass the Peer Specialist Test”

Was what they said about me
Today I passed the Peer Specialist Test

Detroit August 26, 2009

