

Story #27

Life Is That Way.  
(Written Mon. Feb. 6, 1939.)

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1st. draft  
Feb. 6, 1939.

LIFE IS THAT WAY

THE HEROES OF YESTERYEAR

Burial at Sea.

It was a warm, earthy  
One Saturday morning in the <sup>early</sup> spring,  
When I was seventeen, <sup>they</sup> I ran away from  
home. I ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> got a job at a lumber camp.  
My father chased me part of the way with ~~one~~ a  
pitchfork dung fork. It was not that I had got  
the <sup>hired</sup> girl pregnant, or anything romantic or  
colorful like that — <sup>at that tender age</sup> my oldest brother ~~usually~~ took  
care of that department — but it was over a  
gluttonish ~~slob~~ of an old horse called, of all things,  
Bud.)

If <sup>my</sup> father had got this <sup>old</sup> Bud <sup>soon</sup> ~~horse~~ <sup>in a trade with Weiler</sup> ~~that~~ father had got this old Bud  
~~horse in a trade with old Breadstap.~~  
The ~~breed~~ <sup>breed</sup> and it had ~~developed~~ <sup>developed</sup> that father had got this old Bud  
~~horse in a trade with old Breadstap.~~  
One ~~morning~~ <sup>morning</sup> the old ~~glut~~ <sup>glut</sup> (an  
endearing term we gave my father) and I went to the  
barn, at  
I During the night this <sup>curious animal</sup> ~~friend~~  
~~Bud~~ <sup>Bud</sup> had <sup>gnawed</sup> ~~gnawed~~ his <sup>halter</sup> ~~halter~~ rope, got loose in the barn  
~~struggled~~ <sup>struggled</sup> into four or five <sup>sacks</sup> ~~sacks~~ of oats, and lo!  
when my father and I opened the barn door that  
~~fatigued~~ <sup>fatigued</sup> ~~spring~~ <sup>spring</sup> morning, there stood this <sup>bleated</sup> ~~Bud~~  
beast in the middle of the barn floor, ~~fat~~  
~~posed~~ <sup>posed</sup> on a <sup>god-awful</sup> ~~god-awful~~ mound of <sup>you know</sup> ~~you know~~  
~~oats~~ <sup>oats</sup>, and still <sup>some</sup> ~~some~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>oats</sup>. As we stood in the <sup>floor</sup> ~~floor~~ The place was a  
sea of mingled oats and manure. Seven dinosaurs  
dysentery with <sup>the</sup> ~~dysentery~~ could not have contributed more  
to ~~fatigued~~ <sup>fatigued</sup> the crops of the ~~future~~ <sup>future</sup> tomorrow.  
As we stood spellbound in the <sup>open</sup> ~~open~~ <sup>door</sup> ~~door~~  
this <sup>engaging</sup> ~~engaging~~ <sup>animal</sup> ~~animal~~, <sup>reached</sup> ~~reached~~ <sup>down</sup> ~~down~~ into a <sup>neatly</sup> ~~neatly~~  
emptied sack <sup>its</sup> ~~its~~ <sup>snout</sup> ~~snout~~ into a <sup>sack</sup> ~~sack~~ at <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ feet, <sup>and</sup> ~~and  
<sup>muzzling</sup> ~~muzzling~~ for a little tid-bit to <sup>vary</sup> ~~vary~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ diet, and <sup>came</sup> ~~came~~  
up with another <sup>drumming</sup> ~~drumming~~ <sup>drumming</sup> of oats. I look  
my father. He drew the back of his hand across  
eyes and, as they say in the love stories, uttered a~~

~~This Bud horse~~  
~~that father had got this old Bud~~  
~~horse in a trade with old Breadstap.~~  
~~One morning the old glut (an~~  
~~endearing term we gave my father) and I went to the~~  
~~barn, at~~  
I During the night this <sup>curious animal</sup> ~~friend~~  
~~Bud~~ <sup>Bud</sup> had <sup>gnawed</sup> ~~gnawed~~ his <sup>halter</sup> ~~halter~~ rope, got loose in the barn  
~~struggled~~ <sup>struggled</sup> into four or five <sup>sacks</sup> ~~sacks~~ of oats, and lo!  
when my father and I opened the barn door that  
~~fatigued~~ <sup>fatigued</sup> ~~spring~~ <sup>spring</sup> morning, there stood this <sup>bleated</sup> ~~Bud~~  
beast in the middle of the barn floor, ~~fat~~  
~~posed~~ <sup>posed</sup> on a <sup>god-awful</sup> ~~god-awful~~ mound of <sup>you know</sup> ~~you know~~  
~~oats~~ <sup>oats</sup>, and still <sup>some</sup> ~~some~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~more~~ <sup>oats</sup>. As we stood in the <sup>floor</sup> ~~floor~~ The place was a  
sea of mingled oats and manure. Seven dinosaurs  
dysentery with <sup>the</sup> ~~dysentery~~ could not have contributed more  
to ~~fatigued~~ <sup>fatigued</sup> the crops of the ~~future~~ <sup>future</sup> tomorrow.  
As we stood spellbound in the <sup>open</sup> ~~open~~ <sup>door</sup> ~~door~~  
this <sup>engaging</sup> ~~engaging~~ <sup>animal</sup> ~~animal~~, <sup>reached</sup> ~~reached~~ <sup>down</sup> ~~down~~ into a <sup>neatly</sup> ~~neatly~~  
emptied sack <sup>its</sup> ~~its~~ <sup>snout</sup> ~~snout~~ into a <sup>sack</sup> ~~sack~~ at <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ feet, <sup>and</sup> ~~and  
<sup>muzzling</sup> ~~muzzling~~ for a little tid-bit to <sup>vary</sup> ~~vary~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ diet, and <sup>came</sup> ~~came~~  
up with another <sup>drumming</sup> ~~drumming~~ <sup>drumming</sup> of oats. I look  
my father. He drew the back of his hand across  
eyes and, as they say in the love stories, uttered a~~

the music of his

moans. In fact he uttered quite a series of low  
moans, <sup>gradually</sup> mounting in volume <sup>and intensity</sup> until ~~soon~~ he was soon  
~~about~~ filling the beautiful spring morning air  
with <sup>the moaning of</sup> lament. It is a monument of understatement  
to say <sup>that</sup> my father could swear. <sup>When he swore</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>utterances</sup>  
his curses cracked, they gave out <sup>darting</sup> blue lights, the air was  
filled with static <sup>discharge</sup> shocks. As I stood there my  
heart surged with pride. Never ~~could~~ <sup>could</sup> there be a  
rival to this wealth of invective. <sup>This great man,</sup> My father, was  
the poet laureate of profanity.... Just then ~~the old~~  
<sup>my father</sup> ~~just~~ turned on me.

I was to blame! I <sup>the</sup> blank blank  
spawn of ~~an~~ a hasty and ill-considered marriage,  
the drooping, <sup>ragged-headed</sup> <sup>addle-pated</sup> <sup>hair</sup> ~~to~~ his vast possessions  
(he ran a saloon) didn't even know ~~the~~ how to tie <sup>a</sup> blank blank  
halter rope. My father's flaw lent a <sup>new</sup> dignity to ~~staggering~~  
imbecility.

"An' by the roarin' Jesus," he <sup>roared on,</sup> ~~continued,~~ "you'll  
pick up every <sup>last</sup> ~~out~~ of it takes <sup>all summer long.</sup> ~~a week.~~ I'll be  
litched, lugged and ~~bearded~~ bewildered if a <sup>whimperin'</sup>  
whelp of mine is goin' to <sup>throw</sup> ~~waste~~ my money into a pile  
of —" But <sup>why go on?</sup> <sup>already</sup> <sup>all</sup> you see <sup>how</sup> <sup>this</sup> <sup>boss</sup> <sup>by</sup> <sup>translation</sup>

I knelt to my tush as my father ~~stood~~  
over me. I took an <sup>empty</sup> water pail and <sup>tenderly</sup> led  
Bud, the horse, into his stall, <sup>where he tied him,</sup> <sup>patting him,</sup> <sup>whispering to</sup> him.  
I took an empty water  
pail and <sup>tried</sup> <sup>to</sup> gingerly separate the chaff from the wheat,  
<sup>to speak.</sup> Looking for a needle in a hay stack was child's play.  
And give me the hay stack any old day. My father came  
and stood over me, <sup>leaning on something firm</sup> <sup>unemployed</sup> <sup>domo</sup> <sup>fock.</sup> ~~Out of the corner~~ of my eye  
I could see his long legs planted wide apart on the  
<sup>swollen</sup> mound of my misery. Who was this <sup>boss</sup> fellow Miss  
Robinson had been teaching us about — the lucky  
guy who ~~only~~ <sup>only</sup> had to clean out the Augean stables?  
A. <sup>suddenly</sup> I felt <sup>a surge of</sup> a wave of nausea and <sup>only</sup> almost lay down.



Written by:  
John D. Voelker  
Ishpeming, Michigan

2nd draft

LIFE IS THAT WAY

by  
Robert Traver

*It was not the ordinary,  
stealthily sneaking away  
that his brother had  
used.*

*had escorted*

*romance*

It was a warm, earthy Saturday morning in the early spring, when <sup>Paul</sup> ~~I~~ was <sup>fifteen</sup> ~~seventeen~~, that <sup>he first</sup> ~~I~~ ran away from home. <sup>His</sup> ~~My~~ father chased <sup>me</sup> ~~me~~ part of the way with a dung fork. It was not that <sup>Paul</sup> ~~I~~ had got the hired girl pregnant, or anything romantic or colorful like that. <sup>At</sup> ~~At~~ that tender age <sup>his next</sup> ~~my~~ <sup>older</sup> ~~eldest~~ brother took care of that <sup>the</sup> ~~department~~. ~~It~~ <sup>It</sup> was over a gluttonish ~~slot~~ <sup>slot</sup> of an old horse called, of all things, Bud.

<sup>Oliver</sup> ~~My father~~ had got this Bud horse, a <sup>sway-backed</sup> ~~gelding~~, in a trade with Weiler, the brewer, <sup>several months before.</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>Bud</sup> ~~it~~ had soon developed that <sup>he</sup> ~~was~~ less of a horse than an animated intestine. Each day he could <sup>eat</sup> ~~eat~~ his weight in oats and hay, a phenomenon <sup>which Oliver's pride as</sup> ~~my father~~ refused to accept until the day <sup>Paul</sup> ~~I~~ ran away.

*at a trade*

During the night this curious animal had gnawed his halter rope, got loose in the barn, rooted and gouged into four or five sacks of oats, and lo! when <sup>Oliver and Paul had</sup> ~~my father and I~~ opened the barn door that fateful spring morning, there stood this bloated Bud beast in the middle of the barn floor, calmly slavering and drooling oats, more oats, and still some more oats. The place was a steaming sea of mingled oats and manure. <sup>Paul thought wildly:</sup> ~~Seven~~ dinosaurs with the dysentery could not have contributed more to the crops of tomorrow!

<sup>Oliver and Paul</sup> ~~we~~ stood spellbound in the open barn door. <sup>As they looked,</sup> ~~This~~ engaging animal, blinking thoughtfully, reached his snout into a half-buried sack at his feet, nuzzling for a little tid-bit to vary his diet -- and came up with another dripping maw of oats. <sup>Paul</sup> ~~I~~ looked at <sup>his</sup> ~~my~~ father. <sup>Oliver had drawn</sup> ~~He drew~~ the back of his hand across his eyes and, as they say in the love stories, uttered a low moan. In fact he uttered quite a series of low moans, gradually mounting in volume and intensity until he was soon filling the <sup>early</sup> ~~beautiful~~ spring morning air with the music of his lament.

Paul was numbed by this display of genuine sentimentality.

It is a monument of understatement to say that <sup>Oliver</sup> my father could swear. When he swore his curses crackled, they gave out darting blue lights, the air was filled with static electric shocks. As <sup>Paul</sup> I stood there <sup>his</sup> heart surged with <sup>a fearful</sup> pride. Never could there be a rival to this wealth of invective. "This great man, my father, was the poet laureate of profanity," <sup>Paul thought</sup> Just then <sup>Oliver</sup> my father turned on <sup>Paul</sup> ~~Paul~~...

<sup>Paul</sup> I was to blame! <sup>Paul</sup> I -- the blank <sup>or</sup> blank spawn of a hasty and ill-considered marriage! the drooling, addle-pated heir to his vast possessions, <sup>(he ran a saloon)</sup> -- didn't even know how to tie a blankety blank halter rope. <sup>My father's</sup> flow lent a new dignity <sup>to</sup> <sup>mere</sup> imbecility.

"An' by the roarin' Jesus," <sup>Oliver</sup> he rushed on, "you'll pick up every last oat if it takes all summer long. I'll be bitched, bugged and bewildered if a <sup>fumbler's</sup> ~~winter's~~ whelp of mine is goin' to throw my money into a pile of --" ~~But why go on? You see already how all this loses by translation.~~ <sup>It was Paul's turn to utter a low moan.</sup>

<sup>Paul</sup> I knelt to <sup>his</sup> task as <sup>Oliver</sup> my father tenderly led Bud, the horse, into his stall, where he tied him, patting him, whispering <sup>ed</sup> to him. <sup>Paul</sup> He took an empty water pail and tried <sup>ed</sup> gingerly <sup>to</sup> separate the chaff from the wheat, <sup>so to speak</sup>. Looking for a needle in a hay stack was <sup>he concluded</sup> child's play. "And give me <sup>a</sup> the hay stack any old day. <sup>Paul</sup> My father came and stood over <sup>me</sup>, leaning on an <sup>Oliver</sup> unemployed dung fork. Out of the corner of <sup>his</sup> my eye <sup>Paul</sup> I could see <sup>Oliver's</sup> his long legs planted wide apart on the swollen mound of <sup>his</sup> my misery. Who was <sup>Paul thought wildly</sup> this fellow Miss Robinson had been teaching us about -- the lucky guy who had only to clean out the Augean stables?"

Suddenly <sup>Paul</sup> I felt a surge of <sup>nausea</sup>, and I almost <sup>He wanted to lie</sup> lay down. "Get a move on you," <sup>Oliver</sup> my father said. <sup>Paul</sup> I knelt there, swaying, in the manure. <sup>He</sup> I did not move. "Get a move on you," <sup>Oliver said</sup> I said, " <sup>in</sup> a rising voice.

Boarders in the Saloon <sup>next door</sup> ~~ran~~ <sup>ran</sup> to their windows, drawn by the tumult, and <sup>marked</sup> their progress with interest. Oliver

Paul

<sup>his</sup> stood up and looked at ~~my~~ father. Behind him stood the animal, Bud, gnawing at the wood of his stall; standing there in all his greedy, oat-bloated, dung-coated splendor. <sup>legs cracked and</sup>

"You!" <sup>Paul</sup> I said to <sup>his</sup> father, slowly <sup>his voice vibrant, his gray eyes boring</sup> ~~said~~, looking into his

angry <sup>blue</sup> eyes. "You and your horse, Sir, can go straight to hell!" <sup>Paul</sup> Then I turned and bolted, darted out of the barn <sup>with</sup> ~~my~~ Oliver

~~father~~ hot on <sup>his</sup> heels. <sup>Paul</sup> He chased ~~me~~ out of the barnyard, across the railroad tracks in front of a <sup>moving</sup> ~~moving~~ freight train, past

Weiler's brewery, the old fire hall, and back across the tracks again. <sup>Paul</sup> I could hear he was losing ground. <sup>He</sup> looked over ~~my~~ <sup>his</sup> shoulder.

<sup>By an act of divine intervention, the</sup> The freight train was coming between us. <sup>them</sup> My father stood panting by the tracks, holding <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ dung fork like a javelin.

It was too far to throw. When he saw <sup>Paul</sup> looking back, he shook his fist and <sup>leaped</sup> ~~furiously~~ <sup>wildly</sup> shouted, above the rumble of the moving cars, "I -- I'll go you to hell!"

~~Then~~ The freight train drew alongside and cut <sup>Oliver</sup> ~~him~~ off from view. The engineer was grinning <sup>and checking his two hands at Paul. Paul, white-faced,</sup> ~~at me~~. <sup>Paul</sup> I ran and caught on

to the rung of the first box car and started to climb. <sup>He</sup> climbed with a heavy heart. There was a big lump in <sup>his</sup> ~~my~~ throat. Here, at

a time when <sup>he</sup> I might never see or hear <sup>his</sup> ~~my~~ father again, when <sup>he</sup> he expected him, somehow, to reach new heights of invective, to open

up new vistas of vehemence, the best <sup>Oliver</sup> ~~he~~ could manage was, "I'll go you to hell!" <sup>Paul supposed,</sup> But I suppose, in the last analysis, <sup>this</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>is</sup> what is known as Life!

~~I didn't get home for three days and two nights.~~

As the freight <sup>train</sup> passed the Third street crossing, and gathered speed, Paul <sup>suddenly</sup> concluded that this, in the last analysis, was the inevitable way of Life!

Written by:  
John D. Voelker  
Ishpeming, Michigan

LIFE IS THAT WAY

by  
Robert Traver

It was a warm, earthy Saturday morning in the early spring, when I was seventeen, that I ran away from home. My father chased me part of the way with a dung fork. It was not that I had got the hired girl pregnant, or anything romantic or colorful like that -- at that tender age my oldest brother took care of that department -- but it was over a gluttonish slob of an old horse called, of all things, Bud.

My father had got this Bud horse, a sway-backed gelding, in a trade with Weiler, the brewer, and it had soon developed that he was less of a horse than an animated intestine. Each day he could eat his weight in oats and hay, a phenomenon my father refused to accept until the day I ran away.

During the night this curious animal had gnawed his halter rope, got loose in the barn, rooted and gouged into four or five sacks of oats, and lo! when my father and I opened the barn door that fateful spring morning, there stood this bloated Bud beast in the middle of the barn floor, calmly slavering and drooling oats, more oats, and still some more oats. The place was a steaming sea of mingled oats and manure. Seven dinosaurs with the dysentery could not have contributed more to the crops of tomorrow.

As we stood spellbound in the open barn door, this engaging animal, blinking thoughtfully, reached his snout into a half-buried sack at his feet, nuzzling for a little tid-bit to vary his diet -- and came up with another dripping maw of oats. I looked at my father. He drew the back of his hand across his eyes and, as they say in the love stories, uttered a low moan. In fact he uttered quite a series of low moans, gradually mounting in volume and intensity until he was soon filling the beautiful spring morning air with the music of his lament.



It is a monument of understatement to say that my father could swear. When he swore his curses crackled, they gave out darting blue lights, the air was filled with static electric shocks. As I stood there my heart surged with pride. Never could there be a rival to this wealth of invective. This great man, my father, was the poet laureate of profanity....Just then my father turned on me.

I was to blame! I -- the blank blank spawn of a hasty and ill-considered marriage, the drooling, addle-pated heir to his vast possessions (he ran a saloon) -- didn't even know how to tie a blankety blank halter rope. My father's flow lent a new dignity to imbecility.

"An' by the roarin' Jesus," he rushed on, "you'll pick up every last oat if it takes all summer long. I'll be bitched, bugged and bewildered if a whimperin' whelp of mine is goin' to throw my money into a pile of --" But why go on? You see already how all this loses by translation.

I knelt to my task as my father tenderly led Bud, the horse, into his stall, where he tied him, patting him, whispering to him. I took an empty water pail and tried gingerly to separate the chaff from the wheat, so to speak. Looking for a needle in a hay stack was child's play. And give me the hay stack any old day. My father came and stood over me, leaning on an unemployed dung fork. Out of the corner of my eye I could see his long legs planted wide apart on the swollen mound of my misery. Who was this fellow Miss Robinson had been teaching us about -- the lucky guy who had only to clean out the Augean stables?

Suddenly I felt a surge of nausea and I almost lay down.

"Get a move on you," my father said.

I knelt there, swaying, in the manure. I did not move.

"Get a move on you, I said." In a rising voice.

I stood up and looked at my father. Behind him stood the animal, Bud, gnawing at the wood of his stall; standing there in all his greedy, oat-bloated, dung-coated splendor.

"You," I said to my father, slowly said, looking into his angry gray eyes, "You and your horse, Sir, can go straight to hell." Then I turned and bolted, darted out of the barn, my father hot on my heels. He chased me out of the barnyard, across the railroad tracks in front of a moving freight train, past Weiler's brewery, the old fire hall, and back across the tracks again. I could hear he was losing ground. I looked over my shoulder. The freight train was coming between us. My father stood panting by the tracks, holding the dung fork like a javelin. It was too far to throw. When he saw me looking back, he shook his fist and faintly shouted, above the rumble of the moving cars, "I -- I'll go you to hell!"

Then the freight train drew alongside and cut him off from view. The engineer was grinning at me. I ran and caught on to the rung of the first box car and started to climb. I climbed with a heavy heart. There was a big lump in my throat. Here, at a time when I might never see or hear my father again, when I expected him, somehow, to reach new heights of invective, to open up new vistas of vehemence, the best he could manage was, "I'll go you to hell!" But I suppose, in the last analysis, that that, alas! is what is known as Life.

I didn't return home for three days and two nights.