

For my mother's 90th birthday, Oct. 15, 1998. She grew up in West Texas and spent her last 50 years in New Mexico.

Dogwoods at Dusk

You'd love them, dear; so different from
The desert mountain trees you see.
Every one's bright white or pink
And suns its glory on the green
And shadows of the other trees.

How can they be as bright at dusk?
They seem to be. In contrast with
The other trees—all shadows now
And blackish green—they draw the eye
More strongly than in midday sun,

As you, dear mother, in the dusk of years,
Seem all the brighter in your wood
Of trees now shadows of their youth—
Most seen in silhouette alone,
And sad against the twilight sky.

Your brightness is more striking now
Than in your midday sun. You learn;
You care; you write, tell jokes, win games
Share counsel, wisdom, faith, and joy.
You bloom, bright white.

Don't fade. Don't go,
No matter how that good night calls,
Until the dying of the light
Leaves none of us to see at all.

Then rest 'til morning, when the Son
Will make your whiteness twice as bright
Among the pinks and glorious greens
That never again face dusk or night.

Robert D. Smith