

## Father

You were there when I left,  
And I was gone for years.  
You were still there when I returned  
As though you were waiting for me  
To come back before you died;  
As though you needed to know I was O.K.  
Maybe you thought you could help me somehow  
By being there.  
Perhaps, you needed me.  
You have changed and say new words;  
I, too, have changed.  
Your silent heart love  
Buys me, lifts me up  
To do what I have never done before.  
Your years have diminished your demeanor  
But not your heart;  
And I am grateful.

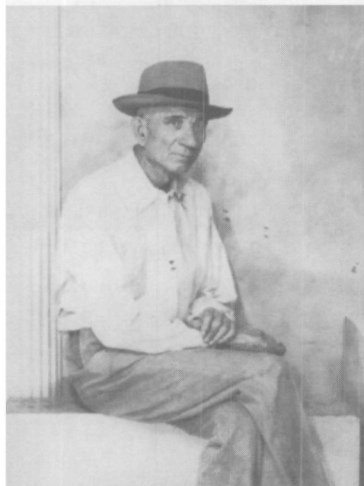


photo provided by Shellie Shirk