The Apron
By Marleen Ehmann Bussma

It hung nearby the cook stove
On a peg carved out of wood.
Its daily chore and purpose
Was most clearly understood.

T’was made from scraps of dresses
Or an empty flour sack.
It covered neck to hemline
And was tied around the back.

It carried in the kindling
To start cooking meals each day
And held the gathered eggs that
Hens and pullets worked to lay.

It served as a pot holder
For the pies and cakes and bread,
The meat and beans and taters
That kept family well fed.

It traveled to the garden
To bring back all ripe to eat.
It carried in the apples
And wiped brows wet from the heat.

It helped in shooing chickens
From the garden and what’s more
It chased away the house flies
Landing on the front screen door.

It cuddled up the baby;
Kept the ev’ning chill away.
It dried the tears on faces
Of those children hurt at play.

When someone unexpected
Did stop by to make a call
It turned into a dust rag
Quickly wiping over all.
When visitors would stop by
It would give a place to hide
To shy and bashful children
Who kept to their mother’s side.

When meals were fixed and ready
To be eaten by the men
It served as that day’s beacon
As it had time and again.

When held aloft and flowing
On a breeze it whipped and reeled
Then waved men home for dinner
When they saw it from the field.

The apron was essential
For each woman long ago;
For nurture, chores and comfort
And it served its family so.

The dress’s poor relation
Didn’t get a second glance.
It never got invited
To the party or the dance.

Martin Ehmann and his sister in law Lydia
Zimmerman Mueller. Early 1940s.