

## Lilac Time in Michigan

It's lilac time in Michigan  
And the old farm smells so sweet  
When the cows go out on pasture  
And the rhubarb's right to eat.

There are fox kits in the hayfield  
And kittens in the barn,  
And a little white-faced heifer  
By her mother near the pond.

The mares are with their foals  
All on the pasture hill asleep,  
And woodchucks scurry near the lane  
Where the bluff is high and steep.

A raccoon has her litter  
Inside that old shop wall;  
She's found a way to get into  
The cat food, and eat it all.

There's a brilliant carpet in the woods  
Where the big doe beds her fawn,  
And Grandma's telling Grandpa  
That it's time to mow the lawn.

The roosters crow at daybreak,  
And the hens lay eggs all day;  
Then Grandma fetches Grandpa's hat  
And steals the eggs away.

The little Bantam hen has hatched  
Four chicks, she did her best;  
She set the eggs three extra days  
Then took those four and left.

The mallard duck has two eggs  
Where the woodland pasture floods;  
Her husband's keeping watch down  
On the pond beside the woods.

The sand hill cranes keep gobbling  
As if they've pledged to spread alarm,  
While Canadian geese go honking by  
Sky high above the farm.

The gold finch is on the thorn apple  
The warblers are sweeping through;  
The redwing's on the cattail  
And the red-tailed hawk's here too.

A wayward pigeon's made her nest  
Above the big barn door,  
Beside the hewn oak beam that rests  
Against the hay mow floor.

The big barn's cleared of last year's hay  
And the little barn as well;  
We're ready for the spreader  
And that special springtime smell.

There's a bloom on one tomato plant  
But the night air still is chill;  
A lone asparagus sprig stands by  
A yellow daffodil.

Bright hanging blossom baskets  
Ride the breeze up near the house  
Where Grandma put them up one day  
While Grandpa fixed the tree house.

The humming birds are humming  
Once again by Grandma's flowers,  
And the sunlight in the kitchen  
Window floods the happy hours.

Maggie Good Dog still holds her job  
Of rounding out the family;  
She climbs on laps to comfort,  
Knowing her responsibility.

She leaps up high and bounces  
When we ask if she'd like to go  
On one of our quiet evening rides  
On the Freedom Township roads.

The barn swallows have just returned  
The cliff swallows not yet this year;  
They'll all build sturdy mudded nests  
And swoop the lots and pastures.

They flit and flip in all directions  
In the hay fields when we mow,  
Providing great mosquito protection  
For the summer guests we'll know.

From the new swing in the walnut tree,  
You can see clear down the road,  
Where the Bethel Church stands, beautiful  
And the farm trucks pass with loads.

The grandkids come in a month or so  
On an airplane from the West,  
And we'll be there to snatch them up  
And bring them chattering to our nest.

As usual, spring seems late again  
But it finally has arrived;  
When it's lilac time in Michigan  
It's awfully nice to be alive.

-- Richard D. Alexander