

Hibbie: Fossil Man

Claude Hibbard died one day,
came to work at 7:30 as usual
and fell over dead.

Died in the harness,
Charles said.

Hibbie

who took kids to Kansas and dug up fossils
and considered with them things like
whether turtles had to wear snowshoes
to avoid the glaciers and leave their remains
where they did.

Hibbie

who knew the shark's tooth Jim found
in a pile of rubbly stone in Emory
Mulholland's hawthorn-filled pasture
was a new species for the state of Michigan.

Hibbie

Enthusiastic, earnest,
folksy Hibbie,

famous to farmers all over the Great Plains
as Doctor Claude W. Hibbard,
The Paleontology Professor from Michigan.

Strange that no one exists now
to care about his personal record
that no student ever field-tripped
with him twice and failed later
to obtain the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy
in Paleontology.

Except, Hibbie worried to me
not so very long ago, while
standing in my office door,
our mutual friend, Bob, who
had somehow disappeared
from Academia. But,

unknown to Hibbie and me,
Bob had only taken some time
to serve in the United States Navy.

A while after that final morning,
Bob returned, and kept intact
the educational record of the
late Professor Claude W. Hibbard.

