

Charlie's Travels

by Michelle Elvy

Charlie Hancock missed the bus. Started walking.

Charlie Hancock boarded the bus, sat in a seat in the back, the same seat he always chose.

He didn't stop anywhere or talk to anyone, just kept walking.

He looked around at the familiar faces, the ones he saw every evening on the Number 9, felt a pang of guilt — but only a small pang.

Out past the town line, to where Main Street turned to gravel and then dirt.

He remained calm as the bus came to a stop at the corner of Pine. He slid down low in his seat and waited for the next passenger.

He came to a field, sat under the shade of a large oak and began to cry.

Sweat beaded his brow as he watched the man board the bus — this man whom he'd planned to follow home and shoot for all the right reasons.

He pulled out the gun, tossed it far as he could, forsaking revenge.

But on this night the man was carrying a bundle which cooed and smiled while he paid the driver.

Then Charlie wiped his brow, stood up and walked toward the grassy spot where the gun had fallen. *There's always tomorrow*, he thought. *Tomorrow I might not miss the bus.*

And Charlie, losing all resolve for all the right reasons, decided then and there against revenge.

