Uncle Ab From Abington — November 19, 1975

(BY JIM JONES)

This is a day of sadness in this Ol' Hoosier Farmer's house. Today the radio brought the news of the tragic military aircraft explosion over South Carolina and the death of an old friend, Grady Rudolph of Dayton, Indiana.

Grady was a young fellow when we lived in little Dayton. He lived a few blocks from our place and was in our home often. I remember him as a tall, quiet young man, troubled with a skin problem but one of the most pleasant, cheerful fellows one could meet. He was one of several bright boys who worked hard, studied hard and enjoyed life to the fullest. He and several other very likeable boys formed a rock band and we recorded them several times. They were good musicians who took their work seriously and enjoyed what they were doing.

We haven't seen Grady for five years or so but the news of his sudden and tragic death touched us deeply. It seems only yesterday Grady, Tom Yost, the Grimes brothers and others were in the living room of the old brick house on Indiana 38 in Dayton listening to a tape playback of their latest performance. These sessions were always serious ones, a time of self-criticism and analysis.

Dayton, Indiana is a wide place in the road, a little rural town of only a few hundred souls. There's a bank, a couple churches, a funeral home, a restaurant, and not much else but for some wonderful Hoosier folks who were always glad to socialize, have a good time and be there if you needed a friend. A typical Hoosier community, steeped in Indiana soil and the surrounding farmland. Grady Rudolph was a son of this environment, and during the time we knew him we felt our lives were a little better from this association. He was always welcome at our place and we looked forward to his visits.

Now he is gone. A dreadful loss, some will say, only in his mid-twenties, leaving a wife, parents and family. His mother was cashier at the bank where we did business, and we always had a few friendly words when we stopped in on Friday evenings. But this Ol' Hoosier Farmer figures that our loss is not a total one. The world, Dayton, and Indiana were better places since Grady Rudolph was there. Heaven is going to have to make room for one of Indiana's finest and we look forward to shaking that friendly hand once again some day. We relish the pleasant memories of the past, and ask the Good Lord to lay His hand on those left behind.