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Immortal Hari
 continued

or that happy event. For my arrangements to bring a friend from the country, a special weekend before the holiday was delivered in a pickup

never have been tolerated there, so the ranch was now their home, as it was becoming mine. Susie felt as we all did that Hari should never become an apartment dog, forced to adjust to a world of elevators and parking lots, foul-smelling pet areas and thin-walled cubicles where a bark was grounds for eviction.

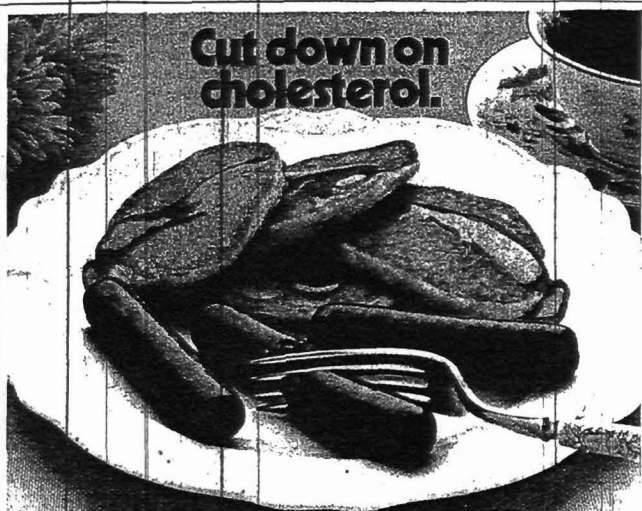
It became necessary for me to divide my time equally between the country and city families in order to fulfill responsibilities in both places. Susie and her

year old who knew him far better than I was the most difficult task I have ever undertaken. Fortunately, Hari's wife and daughter thrived on country life, and their experiences became his. I told of encounters with peacocks and kittens, of trips to the dump and excursions to gather wildflowers. The country air was good for Hari, Susie decided. "It's more like Tibet up there." My throat tightened and I could not answer.

I was called upon to keep Hari alive and well for nine months. To say that I succeeded would be to overestimate my skills, and to underestimate my dear daughter's sensitive awareness. Although she gave no indication of suspecting the truth, toward the end of her life she asked less often about Hari. I am certain this was partly to spare me, for Susie's concern with the slightest discomfort she detected in the rest of us was always greater than her worries about herself. She was blessed with that sixth sense the handicapped share, reserved for those who need it most, insight unrelated to the physical receptors that guide the rest of us. I believe she knew. I also believe that the truth did not upset her so drastically as we believed it might. For her, Hari was there beside her where he belonged.

I realize now that my attempts to give Hari a life beyond his own were never necessary. He had taken care of that, as he took care of all his responsibilities to Susie. He was never one to leave a doubt about his presence, but he believed that the larger we were the more we needed reminding. Just in case, his daughter with all her father's ways, rests her chin lightly on my toes today. Even that was an unnecessary precaution. Hari is immortal. He always was. **End**

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life-supporting parapitals provide. She did it at Christmas, but only for it was reasonable, she Hari and the rest of the r in the country. Also, w ity house and moved to an rer the hospital, a neces- expenses and respon- le small pets were allowed g, all our animals would

mother, meanwhile, remained together at home or in the hospital. The arrangement was manageable, if never entirely satisfactory, and it did account for Hari's continuing absence. Nothing could make easy my regular arrivals at Susie's bedside, however, when news of Hari was her first request. Making up stories to delight a child is a precious part of every parent's experience, but relating Hari's fictitious adventures to a perceptive 20

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CHICKEN OF THE SEA® TUNA FLORENTINE (Serves 6)

- 2 pkgs. (10 oz. each) frozen chopped spinach, thawed
- 2 tbsps. instant minced onion
- 1 can (12 1/2 oz.) Chicken of the Sea® tuna, drained
- 6 hard cooked eggs, sliced
- 2 cans (10 1/2 oz.) condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup (1/2 pt.) sour cream
- Salt & pepper
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 cups soft bread crumbs (about 4 slices)

Squeeze spinach to remove excess liquid. Spread spinach evenly in a greased 2 qt. casserole. Sprinkle with onion, tuna, and eggs. Mix mushroom soup & sour cream. Pour mixture evenly over eggs. Mix melted butter & crumbs and sprinkle evenly over top of casserole. Bake in preheated moderate oven (350° F.) for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly.

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