

50. **FUTURES -- Fantasy and Fact**

In a romantic future, I have my own private school, staffed by those people I know to be master teachers. I have published a revolutionary textbook that integrates the study of literature, composition, grammar, and usage. Of course, I have completed my doctorate (submitting a dissertation which not only astounded everyone on my committee, but also personally impressed the Bizzell librarian). I have started a company that manufactures and distributes innovative teaching materials. I am still happily married and all of my family are well.

In a realistic future, I am still teaching in a public school and still planning the textbook and the company. I have my Ph.D. because I worked five (or ten or . . .) hard years to get it. My marriage is still happy, but I have lost some older family members because they were mortal, as are we all.

The major difference in the two futures is that the romantic one assumes wishful thinking makes it so. For hopeful plans to become real successes, I must stop dreaming and start doing. I have the necessary ideas and skills, but I don't know yet if I want these things badly enough to give the time and hard work needed. I may be too lazy to work to make those dreams come true.

In the romantic future death is but a dream; yet illness, age, and death are realities. The unalterable, unavoidable truth is that grandparents and parents in time will die. The best I can do is remember to show them my love while I can.