

The Dakota Badlands

*Through eons past, the stalwart hills
Raised towering summits to the sky.
With every decade, Nature's hand
Carved monuments to God on high:*

*Pulpits that no man's hand can mold
Out of the slag, the shale, and clay;
Burnt umber hues shellacked by sun,
And Nature's paint brush day by day;
Deep caverns where erosion shaped
Fantastic sculpture, unsurpassed
By human artistry or plan,
Or mortal skill to form the cast.*

*These are the Badlands vast and grand,
Creviced by fire, wind, and rain --
Majestic buttes that border streams
And stretch into the grassy plain.*

*Like stoic sentinels on guard,
For miles and miles they rise to scan
The muddy river winding through
The wet clay gulches and the sand.
The giant poplars crowd its banks
And spread into a fertile grove,
To reach toward the infinite sky,
Embrace the earth, and feel it move!*

*These are the Badlands . . . pioneers dared
With Roosevelt to search, explore
Through craggy depths and treacherous land,
And write its history evermore.*

*When God in his omnipotent power
Created earth and found it good,
He placed the Badlands in our midst.
The peace of mind in solitude
Found there by visitors who pause
For solace in a hectic day,
Transcends all found in man-made shrines,
Though Nature's pulpits are but clay!*



From "After This Harvest", Copyright 1964 Elvina Granlie McNamara,
Triangle Publishing Company, Dallas, Texas.