

Greg Alan Brownderville

**All of this only fifty miles from
the former home of L. Frank Baum,
creator of *The Wizard of Oz***

Late afternoon, July 1, 1955, in Edmunds County, South Dakota: The sky was lovely lemonade. Nine-year-old Sharon Weron, her mother trailing in a car, was riding home a freshly purchased pregnant mare. They were 150 feet from home when sudden clouds bombed hail. The mother stopped and put a puffy black winter coat on the girl and said, “Cut across the field to the house. I’ll take the road around and meet you there.” The mother made it first and, as her daughter sped across the field on the gray and white horse, there it was in a camouflage sky—a clay pot on an unmanned potter’s wheel. The horse wheeled and fled, muscling up a high hill, but in vain. The mother watched her little girl’s long yellow hair swirling madly in the wind, a drop of food coloring diffusing in a glass of water. Still astraddle the horse, Sharon ascended from the earth and rode 1000 feet inside a whirl witnesses described as “a bail of wire in air.” The mare survived, as did the colt within her womb. Unhurt, remembering nothing of the ride, Sharon landed on her belly like an airplane, let down easy into the windy italicization of the wheat.