

# The Messenger

---

Volume 1988  
Issue 1 *Messenger* 1988

Article 10

---

1988

## Mama, Who's Mr. Roosevelt

Amy Crandall

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>

 Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Crandall, Amy (1988) "Mama, Who's Mr. Roosevelt," *The Messenger*: Vol. 1988 : Iss. 1 , Article 10.  
Available at: <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol1988/iss1/10>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *The Messenger* by an authorized editor of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact [scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu](mailto:scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu).

## MAMA, WHO'S MR. ROOSEVELT?

Mama and Daddy are out in the barn  
milking the cows.

Big, warm black-and-white shapes  
makin' funny noises all the time,  
even when they crunch their feed.

I tiptoe over to the radio,  
click the big knob and instantly  
"Stella Dallas" comes into our living room.

High, lady voices like Aunt Hannah's  
and low, men voices like Granddad Harp's  
echo through the first floor

off the floors and ceilings, the stove,  
the ice box and Mama's pots and pans.

I ain't supposed to have the radio on,  
or even touch it, Daddy said, so I keep  
it kinda low.

All of a sudden the voices are gone,  
replaced by static and another man's voice  
talkin' fast.

"Ladies and gentlemen,  
we interrupt this program  
for a special news report.  
WQZF has just gotten word that  
Franklin Delano Roosevelt,  
the thirty-second president  
of the United States,  
has died of a cerebral hemorrhage. . ."

*Continued*

Roosevelt?

Mama and Papa knew him.  
They always talked about him  
at the dinner table.  
Maybe he was their friend.

Anyways,  
they'd want to know what I heard.  
I ran out of the house.  
The screen door sounded like a rifle shot  
as it slammed after me.  
The path to the barn was muddy  
from yesterday's rain  
and I slipped and fell.  
My white knee socks were bunched  
around my ankles and my legs  
were streaked with mud.  
Boy,  
would I catch it when Mama saw me.

She and Daddy were talking  
when I burst into the barn.  
They looked at me,  
surprised and alarmed.  
I breathed in the sweet hay smell  
as they asked me if the house was on fire  
or if Baby was sick.  
I repeated the radio man's words.  
Daddy just sat on the milking stool  
and covered his face with his hands.  
Tears rolled down Mama's cheeks  
as she took my hand to walk back up  
to the house.  
I grabbed her apron.  
"Mama, who's Mr. Roosevelt?"

*Amy Crandall*