

# Big Woollie

By Barbara Wilton – 2022

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A craze came through our country school  
A home spun jersey would look cool.  
The fashion then so quickly spread  
A new parent walked in and said....

‘Is it part of school uniform,  
Designed to keep the children warm?  
Where do I buy one just like this?  
This is an opportunity not to miss.’

But no, these jerseys were made by hand,  
Slowly, with love, a mother’s brand.  
No shop could match her tender care  
For a jersey that’s worn everywhere.

Our kids talked their way into one  
But found wash day not much fun.  
Spread to dry on the freezer top  
The younger one would have to stop.

He'd rest his ear on the soft moist wool  
Sometimes reaching up with the stool.  
The time seemed to go slowly by  
Waiting for it to be quite dry.

Because the younger one was so small  
His jersey didn't fit long at all.  
He managed to be the lucky one  
To score a second production run.

The older one went off to Uni,  
Her own 'Big Woollie' still quite roomy.  
Worn elbows made it less than best  
So, with sleeves removed, it became a vest.

Dad decided he needed a Big Woollie too.  
Mum finished and said, 'The last one's for you.'  
'No more jerseys, you're all big and strong.  
Your backs are too wide, and your arms are too long.'

The kids moved out of the Big Woollie phase  
But Dad never got over the craze.  
Racing home after work each night  
Relaxing in his jersey felt just right.

When the grandkids were born they snuggled in  
With their soft hair under Grandpa's chin.  
Big Woollie gave them a sense of calm  
And a cosy feel straight from the farm.

As years went by Big Woollie wore out.  
His fraying future was in doubt.  
Mum sewed corduroy elbow patches by night,  
Made from left over fabric that looked just right.

Big Woollie wasn't meant for holidays  
But wherever it was that we went away  
Mum found him tucked in Dad's suitcase  
As an afterthought, in a secret place.

He turned up under Dad's fishing coat  
And even went overseas by plane and boat.  
Then, Dad had to have an operation on his knee  
And it was off to hospital for surgery.

Dad packed his hospital suitcase himself,  
Then stored it on the locker's high shelf.  
When Mum was folding the clothes away  
There was Big Woollie, all patched and frayed.

'What do you need him for?' she said.  
'Hospitals are hot, and you'll be in bed!'  
Dad just looked and had nothing to say,  
Big Woollie looked like he was there to stay.

That afternoon while Dad was having a rest,  
Mum bought some home spun wool, the very best.  
Some soothing knitting to pass the time,  
A new Big Woollie was on her mind.

She knitted daily through Dad's recovery  
And thinks she made a new discovery.  
Was it the medical team that made Dad well?  
Or was it the new Big Woollie with the sheepy smell?