In Loving Memory of
Walter M. Hagood, Jr.
October 21 – October 25, 1908

“The Promise”

You came like a whisper, a breath in the pine,
A flicker of morning, too brief to define.
Borne on a wagon through dust, wind, and grace,
You touched down on Preston, a soul out of place.

No cradle was rocked, no first laugh was heard,
Just silence, then sorrow, too deep for a word.
But love—old and stubborn—refused to let go,
It rooted in promise where wildflowers grow.

Nancy, with hands rough from earth and from time,
Gave vow to a mother in grief’s silent rhyme:
“Go on to your future, don’t carry the weight,
This child will be honored, though brief was his fate.”

And so every year as the spring called the day,
She came with her flowers to brighten the clay.
Then Minnie, then Wilma, each hand took the thread,
They stitched time together with prayers for the dead.

And when age took the keepers, and twilight drew near,
The brothers of Lebanon Lodge did appear.
They stood by the vow with unshakable stride—
And kept it with honor, with love, and with pride.

Now over a century past that first cry,
Still blooms mark the place where young Walter lies.

A grave, just a marker, yet heavy with love—
A century’s promise still kept from above.
Not lost. Not forgotten. Not left in despair.
For even the briefest of lives can live there.

Right in the heart of a vow once begun—
Where memory endures like the light of the sun.

Brother Christopher Madden, 2025