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Drawn Together ... in Art ... in Love ... in Friendships: The Biography of Caldecott Award- Winning Authors Berta and Elmer Hader

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Drawn Together

...in art

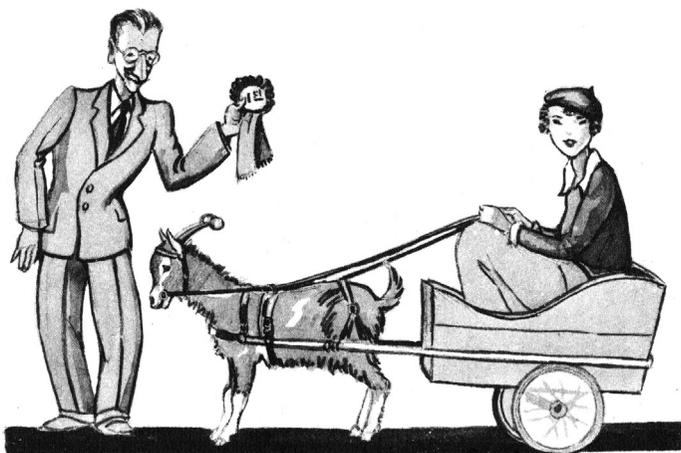
...in love

...in friendships

The Biography of Caldecott Award-winning Authors
Berta and Elmer Hader

by Sybilla Avery Cook

Concordia University Publishing
Portland, Oregon



➔ CHAPTER ONE ➔

TELEGRAPH HILL: ARTS AND HEARTS

TELEGRAPH

*As I went up to Telegraph
Up rough and rugged Telegraph,
The day was fair on Telegraph;
The air was gold with sun.
Along the slanting, cobbled street
The children played on agile feet
Their laughter chimed so clear and sweet
I loved them every one.*

*And then I stood on Telegraph
And looked away from Telegraph.
And, oh, the bay from Telegraph,
As bright as polished steel!
The bay that sparkles blue at noon
The bay that's never out of tune
With any mood I feel!*

- Dmitri Bary²

Telegraph Hill at 274 feet was the highest point seen when sailing through the golden gate passage into San Francisco Bay. The semaphore tower located on top with flags on arms like the messenger flags used aboard ships telegraphed the approach of clipper ships. “When the signal went up that a ship was coming in, the crowds started running and by the time she arrived at Long’s Wharf, a clamoring mob would be yelling for mail, election returns from the East, or goods to buy.”³

The hill was originally settled by Irish immigrants and a smattering of Germans, and later by the Italian dockworkers. They sent home for their families and the North Beach area became known as Little Italy.⁴ The hill was extremely steep. Many visitors were kept away by the periodic noise and shaking from the stone quarry that provided ballast for the ships in the harbor. The stones also provided ammunition for the local children who had a reputation for bullying outsiders. Like many other San Franciscans, Elmer and his brothers had avoided the area.

But now, as an artist newly returned from Paris, he had accepted a challenge to paint this community that had survived the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and subsequent fires. Elmer had been gone from the city for several years, first traveling across the United States with a vaudeville show and then studying art in Paris. The imminence of the Great War had sent him and others back to their home countries, and Elmer had returned to his parents’ home in San Francisco’s Mission District in time for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915. The city was eager to show how it had revitalized itself only nine years after the quake. This exhibition showcasing all types of fine art from various countries brought many visitors to the area, including young

artists and journalists from all over the United States. It intensified Elmer's conviction that he could become a leading San Francisco Impressionist. He built himself an art studio in his parents' attic and set out to paint scenes around the bay.

As he trudged up Telegraph Hill one day, Elmer realized why his artist friend suggested he go there to paint the houses above the harbor area. Not only would the view from the top be spectacular, but the old cottages with their "irresponsible architecture"⁵ had a certain charm. He realized that even though he had spent most of his twenty-six years in San Francisco, he had never explored Telegraph Hill.

Elmer dreaded lugging his paraphernalia up and down the rugged hill. But the friend said she knew an artist/journalist who might be willing to store his heavy paint boxes in her little studio at the top of the hill. It was one of three artist studios built by poet Harry Lafler⁶ from the construction remnants of the giant redwood WELCOME sign that had been erected in 1908. The 50-foot-high letters were visible for thirty miles and easily seen from Theodore Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" as it came to California on its way to circumnavigate the world.

Now it was time to meet the artist and see if she'd store his paraphernalia. Elmer left the Kearney Street streetcar at Broadway and climbed up a long block of steps to Vallejo Street. The vibrant neighborhood reminded him of being on Montmartre, with its struggling artists and immigrants chattering in a *mélange* of languages. As he trudged up the hill, he realized his friend was right—these "ramshackle houses clinging like swallows' nests under the eaves" were picturesque and would be interesting to paint. The 1906 fires had destroyed many of the original residences on

the hill, but those in the Italian area had survived: their occupants had covered the roofs with blankets doused in barrels of home-made wine.

He turned on Union and trudged up to the “ragged, rugged end of Montgomery Street with its dejected pretension at sidewalks.”⁷ He was surrounded by urchins talking in a conglomeration of Italian, Spanish, and broken English. He passed Filbert, known as the Street of a Thousand Stairs and entered the “yellow footpath” of Montgomery Street, as it zigzagged upward on a green slope where Spanish children herded goats.⁸ He couldn’t help but be reminded of a verse by former San Francisco journalist Wallace Irwin.

The Irish they live on the top av it,
And th’ Dagoes they live on th’ base av it,
And th’ goats and th’ chicks
And th’ brickbats and shticks
Is joombled all over th’ face av it!
On Telygraft Hill, Telygraft Hill,
Crazy owld, daisy owld, Telygraft Hill!⁹

Finally reaching the crest, he found the studios were charming, set among the broken-down stone walls and eucalyptus trees of a former park.¹⁰ From here he could see the city’s busy harbor, the Piedmont Hills behind Oakland, and Mount Tamalpais to the north.¹¹ He looked forward to meeting the woman who must manage walking up and down this hill every day.

Berta Hoerner turned out to be delightful. Tall and willowy with a mop of untamable curls, she had an infectious smile. She welcomed this dashing young impressionist with his reddish locks and European air. She was sympathetic to his ambitions and understood why he desired to paint these unlovely shacks with the gorgeous views. They drank tea, listened to violinist Fritz Kreisler

on the phonograph, and talked art. They had much in common, since Berta was taking classes at the California School of Design—his alma mater. Her specialty was miniature portraits: full color portraits of children painted on thin slices of ivory the size of business cards. It was a completely opposite field from his sweeping landscape painting. By the time he left, she'd not only agreed to store his painting supplies but also told him where the key was hidden, so he could pick them up while she was at work.

Berta said she loved living in a house made out of a welcome sign,¹² and she certainly was welcoming to everyone she met. The more he saw of Berta, the more he found himself enchanted by this woman who was the center of a large group of friends. He showed up to paint Telegraph Hill nearly every day, arriving around ten in the morning. He painted the shacks from every possible angle and was often persuaded to stay on for an evening get together with Berta's close friends, many of them writers and journalists living nearby.

One of these was Bessie Beatty¹³, head of the Women's Page for the *San Francisco Bulletin*. Berta had met her soon after taking over Eva Shepherd's fashion illustration business. Bessie liked Berta's artwork and later asked Berta to illustrate some of writer Rose Wilder Lane's feature page stories, including Lane's "The People in Our Apartment House." Berta had already found Rose to be "a gay and charming companion" who had lived with husband Gillette Lane in the same Russian Hill building as she did. Others in the Lombard Street building were Sara Field Bard, suffragist and poet, and Oregon attorney and artist Charles Erskine Scott Wood. They had left Oregon together and were waiting for divorces from their respective spouses. When the Bard/Woods moved out of their apartment, Sara's sister Mary Field Parton moved in with her

husband Lem, also a journalist for the *San Francisco Bulletin*. Berta sometimes looked after their little daughter, Margaret. Rose's mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder, mentioned the "little artist girl in the basement" when she wrote to husband Manly about her visit to Rose during the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition.¹⁴

By the time Berta decided to move to the brown-shingled studio at 1413 Montgomery Street, she, Bessie, and Rose were fast friends. Rose's marriage was beginning to unravel, and she decided to rent the studio next door to Berta. Laura wrote to Manly, "The places are rather dilapidated but can be fixed very cozily." The gorgeous views made up for the fact that it was in a rundown working class area. Laura was relieved when Rose changed her mind about moving: "the landlady who lives next door with seven children, gets drunk and fights."¹⁵ Later, Rose changed her mind again, left Gillette, and moved to Telegraph Hill.

Laura's qualms aside, Berta never felt threatened by their neighbors. They were kind and gracious family people, with adorable children who often posed for Berta's miniature portraits. However, one night Berta came home after dark and found the place surrounded by police: apparently drug addicts were hiding in the neighborhood.¹⁶

Elmer was extremely upset. He spoke to one of his police friends, who advised him that addicts often hung around the area, and offered to have a policeman escort Berta home. Elmer said no, he would take over the escort job himself—a good excuse to see more of this interesting woman.

Berta had a gift for friendship and was always surrounded by old and new friends. Her temporary roommates included Bessie and Paula Cunningham, a nurse friend from Seattle, whose old-

er sister Imogen was becoming a well-known photographer. The friends who clustered around the studios were an eclectic group of passionate people Elmer thought were “extremely talky.” At first he was overwhelmed by the seemingly brilliant conversation: the newspaper people and writers constantly talked over, around, and through each other.

Writer Freddy O’Brien, recently returned from the Marquesa Islands in the South Seas, was the “greatest storyteller who ever lived.” Stella Karn was a circus publicist, small and noisy, with “a mouth like a half-moon.” One of her favorite stories on herself was about taking the baby circus elephant out on walks: “from the rear you couldn’t tell which was Stella and which was the elephant.”

Poet Dmitri Bary was a lively center of attention with a “lion dance” he performed on Berta’s couch and a talent for making and fixing things. (On a return some ten years later, Rose was delighted to find a table he had had made for her was still being used, though the new renters had no idea it was hinged so it could drop down out of the way.) The lion dance on the sofa became one of the legends related about Telegraph Hill’s early days.¹⁷ A Swiss musician, Jean-Jacques Marquis, also joined the group.

Etcher Ernest Haskell was a former graduate of the California School of Design and had also attended the Académie Julian in Paris, though a decade before Elmer. Guy Moyston was a feature article writer for the Associated Press, while Lem Parton, former gold miner, cowboy, and explorer, was currently writing for the *Bulletin*. A big-hearted and genial man, he was always welcome at any gathering. His wife, Mary Parton, was a magazine writer and passionate supporter of the underdog. She had once lived and

worked with Jane Addams at Hull House, the famous settlement house in Chicago.

Elmer's self-confidence, honed from years in vaudeville, easily made him a part of this "talky group," as did his artistic studies abroad. He had a great sense of humor, and quickly became a part of Berta's crowd, along with his musician and artist friends from the Bohemian Club.¹⁸ Twenty or more might cram into the tiny studio quarters, eating Berta's famous "gypsy stew" or fresh bread and cheeses from the Italian markets at the bottom of the hill.

Elmer and Berta enjoyed this lively crowd of divergent personalities. They gradually found they had much in common besides their art, even though their personalities were different. Elmer was usually the center of attention, while Berta was self-effacing. Even though five foot seven, she was often described as "little." She described herself once as "timid but I knew what I wanted to do." He was impetuous and full of ideas: she was quietly determined and usually figured out how to get what she wanted. Both came from caring families but knew it was up to them to make their own futures. The more they talked, took long walks around the city admiring the mysteriousness of Chinatown and the bustling business center, admired new buildings and gorgeous gardens, the more they found similarities in their different upbringings. Each had loved to sketch at a young age, and both had been recognized early as having artistic talent. Each had had third grade teachers who allowed them to draw on the blackboards in colored chalk. Both had been good at handmade crafts; in sixth grade Elmer had even constructed his own banjo from scratch, decorating it with inlays cut from pearl collar buttons. He'd also learned to play the piano by ear, making him a hit at parties.

Berta must have been fascinated when Elmer, blue eyes twinkling behind his spectacles, regaled her with stories about his past. Some sounded too amazing to be true. His mother, Lena Nyberg, had arrived from Sweden as a child and later married Henry Hader, a former Civil War soldier from Pennsylvania. Henry worked on the railroads as they crossed the United States, and they followed his work across the country until finally ending in San Francisco. Henry continued his railroad work there on the San Francisco Belt Line—a short line connecting the piers with the city, meaning he could be home every night.

Elmer was born in Pajaro, California,¹⁹ on 7 September 1889, but lived in San Francisco from his first birthday on. As a little boy he spent time on a nearby ranch and wanted to raise horses when he grew up. A sketch of a boy feeding a colt, drawn when Elmer was only seven, followed them to their house in Grand View-on-Hudson.²⁰

He expected to go to the California School of Design of the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art when he finished high school, but his plans “went up in smoke” when the 1906 San Francisco earthquake—the most destructive earthquake in American history—hit the city. As a sixteen-year-old bugler with the Coast Artillery of the National Guard, he was called to service. “The first few days of the fire, our fire company was in the heart of the city, saving supplies,” he recalled. “We dashed in and out of the burning buildings carrying armfuls of groceries as the firemen played the water hoses above our heads. The heavy smoke so filled the air we couldn’t tell if it was night or day.”²¹ In spite of all valiant efforts, the fire burned out of control for three days destroying some 28,000 buildings. Elmer’s parents lost all they owned, including the potato yeast used as a starter for Lena’s homemade bread.

Since an immigrant woman who'd brought it with her from Ireland had given it to Lena, it could never be replicated. Elmer always remembered missing that bread.²²

Elmer apprenticed as a silversmith, worked as a stock clerk in a hardware store and then found a job with a surveying party near Sacramento. After the surveying job ended, he found a new job firing locomotives for the San Francisco Belt Line. When he wasn't called on to fire locomotives, he swept the floor and polished the brass and found the nights long and monotonous.²³ When the California School of Design reopened in 1907. Elmer used his savings to enroll. From then on, he earned a tuition free scholarship every year.

Like Elmer, Berta also studied at the California School of Design, so they had much to share. She'd led a peripatetic childhood since her 1 August 1890 birth in San Pedro, Mexico. As a young girl, her mother, Adelaide Jennings, had lived in southern Texas on a ranch 45 miles from Uvalde, Texas, where she "loved beyond anything else the freedom to explore alone and on horseback . . . what was such a strange country, with mountains shaped like pyramids . . . rocky, barren land but for cactus . . . where old trails of Indians wound throughout the hills." She remembered one of old General Baylor's sons calling her a mad Yankee because she didn't mind that it was hot. Adelaide wrote, "I explored the mountains carrying a little bottle of lime juice with me to quench my thirst, and then writing a note and corking it inside and hiding the bottle in a crevice for some future climber to find."²⁴

Since her businessman father, William Jennings, had taken his family with him as he traveled all over the United States, Adelaide grew up wanting to stay in one place. She decided to marry

a German because “they never move. I will have a stone bench at my back door and I will wear a groove in it sitting there.”²⁵ But Albert Hoerner, German though he was, moved to Mexico where he joined his brother in a cotton-growing enterprise. Adelaide, once married, faced a “life behind mud walls and iron bars . . . the seclusion and lack of freedom was not at all to my liking.” She dressed Berta “as nearly minus” as possible at a time when babies were bundled up and tried to ensure that “Berta could grow freely.”²⁶

Adelaide’s mother had been an oil painter, and Adelaide herself spent much of her time behind those mud walls making watercolor sketches of picturesque Mexicans, quaint houses, and courtyards. Berta must have been fascinated watching her mother make pictures out of everyday life and undoubtedly sketched right along with her mother. Adelaide always encouraged her art.

The brothers’ cotton business proved unsuccessful. When Berta was only three, the Hoerners moved again: first to Parras, Mexico, and then to Amarillo, Texas, where Albert managed a small grocery store. Adelaide added to the family income by running a kindergarten while caring for Berta and her newborn brother Godfrey.²⁷ Albert knew of his wife’s desire for a piece of land, so he gave her some land on a hilltop for her birthday. But on “the last day of August [her] husband was dead.”²⁸ He died of consumption, only two years after the move to Texas.

Adelaide, determined to support her children by herself, moved to Kansas City to be a social worker. Berta was in third grade there when she won an essay contest and received “a very fine copy of Tom Sawyer.”²⁹ This inspired her to think of a career in writing, even though her mother thought Berta should keep on developing her artistic skills.

Elmer's mother had also encouraged her son's interest in art. She insisted the double crown of hair he had at birth predestined him to be an artist.³⁰ She was not surprised when he won scholarships, including one granting him free tuition at the Académie Julian in Paris, an eclectic school with teachers who were both liked and admired. The academy encouraged new ideas and had a long history of distinguished and international alumni such as Henri Matisse, Marcel DuChamp, Emily Carr, and Edward Steichen.³¹

A French education was considered mandatory for any American artist who hoped to be taken seriously. However, Elmer would have to pay for his travel to Paris and would also have to plan for several years of room and board. He knew his family couldn't afford to send him. He and Edward Holl, friend and fellow Julian scholarship winner, decided they could make good money by forming a vaudeville act.³² Both had learned to be unmoving models for senior classes at art school, so they formed an act called "Visions in Marble" representing the "rosy dreams of a discouraged artist." They posed as classic Greek statues such as "The Discus Thrower." A Colorado Springs paper said, "Their work is so flawless that as the lights play upon them in their classic postures they seem as if carved of pure white marble." The effect was produced by "good lighting, tights or similar clothing, drapes," and occasionally plaster of Paris, white chalk, gilt, or talc. To attract more attention and thus make more money, they added two young women to the show. "The youths were handsome, the poses striking, and audiences were appreciative." They secured a spot on the vaudeville circuit and toured the United States. All was going well until one awful night when they were unable to remove the plaster from their models. "Stiff-faced, the frightened 'stat-

ues' could not speak, but tears oozed from their eyes and rolled down their white coating." When Elmer finally succeeded in removing the mixture, the girls refused to talk to him or Edward. As he said, when later recounting this story, "there was "dissension in the troops."³³

Elmer was known for telling a good story, and this one must have impressed his listeners.

Berta's journey to art school was far less impressive. Her mother had a difficult time earning enough as a social worker to support the family, so they moved from Kansas City to her stockbroker father's home in Suffern, New York. Berta and younger brother Godfrey enrolled in the Suffern elementary schools. During summer vacation, her mother sent Berta to study drawing at an artist's studio, and apparently she achieved some success. Berta remembered being around age nine when "a friend of my mother's . . . ordered art work from me. I remember making a book of Sunbonnet Babies for her." The same friend also paid Berta for making place cards for her, and she was delighted to earn real money from her art.

Adelaide found a job in New York City and enrolled both children in the School of Ethical Culture so the family could commute together.³⁴ Later she moved her little family to Cleveland, where Berta graduated from high school in 1909. Adelaide then moved to Seattle where she had a job at the Washington Home and at the Charity Organization Society and where she married landscaper William Gordon. At last she had a garden with as many flowers as she wanted. In the author biography section of a poetry magazine that published one of Adelaide's poems, she is referred to as "a poet, a gardener and great humanist . . . [who] combines her

three gifts by gathering bouquets, stowing them in a basket, goes downtown from Magnolia Hill, and gives them to people who look tired and unhappy.” When Adelaide was a little girl she had often watched her father, William Jennings, go off to work with a basket of flowers on his arm, and at night she would hear him throw open his window and tell the world goodnight. “God bless the world,” he would call into the dark.

Berta and her new stepfather, Billy Gordon, got along famously. He thoroughly enjoyed having young people in the house and called her “Fluffy,” referring to her hair. He also enjoyed writing and encouraged her plans to study journalism and art.

Elmer, meanwhile, was still working on getting to France.³⁵ The demise of “Visions” was a setback, but Hader and Holl formed a less-expensive act by themselves. In “A Sketch A Minute,” they would draw any subject proposed by the audience. This also proved to be popular and they received an offer for a ten-week tour in New York State.

Just as they were ready to start, Elmer’s brother Waldo sent him a telegram. “Elmer, we have held family council. Decided no use continuing vaudeville. Do not book any more. Making plans for you for Paris. Don’t delay to argue. Are making plans here.”³⁶ A later letter from his father explained the arrangement. The family felt Elmer had wasted enough time. Brother Waldo was working in a meat market, so was able to send Elmer \$10. Siblings Carl and Leota also chipped in.

Now we want you to get ready to cross over without any further delay. Waldo will send you \$100 or we will, anyway it will be Waldo’s money, & we think that sufficient to take you over and locate you for a month. We will put in \$10,

Waldo \$10, Leota \$5, and Carl \$5. So you see it will not come down hard on any of us, & we all are willing and eager to assist you. So now don't try to give any back talk on this matter. Our minds are made up to this arrangement for your benefit, and see to it that you profit by your opportunity.³⁷

Elmer and Edward dawdled long enough to finish the New York tour. By this time they rather liked stage life. After the two arrived in Paris they rented an attic studio on Impasse Marie Blanche and decided to earn some extra cash by doing a little acting on the side. They developed an act, "An Atelier Oddity," got a try-out at the Alhambra, and received a smashing response from the audience. Surprised when they heard nothing from the manager, they finally looked him up, only to be scolded for not replying to his telegram. He had been prepared to offer them "an excellent contract for several months" but it was all finished now—he would not deal with someone who lacked the courtesy to respond. Even when Elmer found and proved he had never received the missing wires, the manager refused to hire them. It was time to concentrate on art.

Once Holl and Hader actually started their studies at the Académie Julian, Elmer was surprised by the competence of the other artists. He had always been considered an outstanding art student, even at the California School of Design and assumed he would still be outstanding in Paris. It was a shock to find that in Paris he was only one of many good artists.³⁸ Not content to be just one of the many, he settled down to his studies under the direction of noted Impressionists François Flameng, Albert Deschenard, and Adolphe Duchaud. He took classes in illustration, figure, portrait,

and “en plein air” landscape painting. Students were taught how to use the looser brushstroke favored by the impressionists and a “subdued and low-keyed palette”³⁹

They were also taught the “Chevreul’s Law of Simultaneous Contrast of Colors.” It states, in part, “The apparent intensity of color does not depend as much on the inherent pigmentation . . . as it does on the hue of the neighboring color.” Furthermore, Chevreul adds, “When two colored objects are scrutinized together, the color of each will be influenced by the complementary color of its neighbor.”⁴⁰ These studies proved to be invaluable later, when Elmer had to work with the very limited palette offered by American printers.

Paris was alive with “colormen” selling a wide variety of synthetic and natural paints in the collapsible tin tubes developed half a century before. These offered the freedom to paint “en plein air,” and the colormen could provide any hue an artist might need or want. These “portable paintboxes” were important to Impressionists. They could paint landscapes changing in differing lights—a movement perfect for a Californian in love with his native outdoor city. Elmer delighted in using them while he painted outdoors one summer in Brittany.

The two roommates shared one large gilded frame to display their paintings, so had to size them to fit. Elmer used the frame for a winter landscape he’d seen when touring in New York State. “Winter—Little Falls” was selected for the 1914 annual Salon Exhibit of the Société des Artistes Français—an honor that might have led to more opportunities except for the imminence of the Great War. All expatriates had to leave Europe. Elmer stopped off in London to paint for a few months⁴¹ before returning to the fam-

ily's new home in the Mission District of San Francisco. He remodeled the upstairs into a studio, and set about becoming the premier California Impressionist.

After moving to Seattle, Berta was dismayed to discover there were no art schools anywhere. A friend told her the best way to learn art was from the staff artists at a printing company, who could teach her the basics. With her usual determination, Berta set out to get a job at one of them. She was turned down everywhere she applied. However, the manager at *Western Engraving and Colortype* must have seen something in the "young girl with tied back curls"⁴² and said they might be hiring in the fall. With her usual persistence she returned in the fall. The manager must have been surprised but he hired her as a half-day apprentice at no pay. One of the company's advertising slogans was "Illustration Beats Explanation," and they hired many artists to prove it. It would be art training of a sort, and she could live at home and take journalism classes half days at the University of Washington.

The manager gave her a table and chair by a window in the storeroom and taught her how to enlarge pictures of household furnishings using a pantograph. It was boring work almost anybody could do, but she got to know many of the commercial artists who worked on staff, especially Eva Shepherd, one of the managers. After a year, she was offered a salary of three dollars a week, and then later a full-time job. That meant leaving the University of Washington,⁴³ but she was learning from Eva and the other artists.

Eva recognized Berta's artistic talent and taught her how to do fashion illustration. Berta's nearsightedness helped her see and draw the smallest details on the dresses of the day. Fashion was

far more interesting than refrigerators and stoves. This attention to detail also led Eva to arrange for her sister Clare Shepherd, who painted miniature portraits on ivory, to give Berta lessons in that field. Berta loved it. One of Clare's friends was Imogen Cunningham, a photographer who had a studio nearby. They became lifelong friends, and Imogen photographed the Haders whenever she came to New York.

Eva had a side business as a freelance fashion designer and illustrator for the Seattle department stores of Frederick & Nelson and the Bon Marché. When Eva took a better job in San Francisco, she asked Berta to take over the Seattle assignments. In 1915, Eva moved again, this time to New York and offered Berta the chance to take over her California business. San Francisco had a number of good art schools, and she could further her art studies and still hold a paying job.

She accepted, left her mother and stepfather William Gordon and sailed to California. She knew two artists at the Chase School of Art in Carmel⁴⁴ and used some savings to take classes there that summer.⁴⁵ She took additional courses at the California School of Design while running Eva's business. Her free time was spent on art studies and on developing her abilities in miniature portraiture. These were watercolor paintings on one to three inch pieces of ivory, about the size of large postage stamps.

San Francisco hosted the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in 1915, displaying the finest modern art from around the world. People from all over visited the Exhibition and discovered the attractiveness of the rebuilt city. A later director of the Palace of Fine Arts said, "San Francisco is one of the six leading cities of the country in attendance at art shows" partly due to the

400,000 who attended this exhibition.⁴⁶ Art students like Berta crowded through the gates to see examples of popular art from other countries.

Rose Wilder Lane and other journalists wrote related and interesting stories for their journals and often interviewed the rising young artists. One story portrayed Elmer as a dashing young man-about-town who had built his own studio in the attic of the family's home. Here he created many paintings from sketches done in Paris and London. The San Francisco Art Association exhibited some of these, and others were exhibited at the Oakland Municipal Gallery.⁴⁷

By the time Berta and Elmer met in 1916, they were both becoming known in their different fields. He was garnering publicity in the local papers and was a member of the Bohemian Club for artists and writers. Berta was taking art classes while supporting herself with illustration work for the *Bulletin*, running Eva's business, and selling her tiny ivory portraits. She charged \$125 each for these painted miniatures, often worn as locketts or mounted in larger gilt frames. Mother Adelaide said this amount was far too high since Berta had "not yet arrived."

Both budding artists enjoyed music and spent many hours listening to the latest classical music on the radio, as well as trying out the latest dances such as the fox trot in impromptu get-togethers. They also attended many other types of musical entertainment, including "dinner dansants." Elmer's Bohemian Club hosted some of these.

A corsage Elmer sent her for one of these events enclosed a poem Berta kept all her life. It was written to fit in the flowers' tiny envelope.

DRAWN TOGETHER

Let these flowers say for me
Just how happy I shall be,
Dear, tonight.
Thinking of your dancing feet
Tripping through the moments. Fleet
With delight.

Dancing feet and dancing eyes—
Parted lips where laughter lies.
Curls that tease—
Oh, my love will follow you
While you dance the bright hours through,
Wearing these.⁴⁸

Neither Berta nor Elmer could see anything but bright hours in their future. They were in love and would live on Telegraph Hill forever. What could possibly get in their way?