

# 3 open minutes

with **Helen Thomas Robson**  
Photographer and Artist

*Progressive Dairyman* Editor Fredric Ridenour recently spoke with photographer Helen Thomas Robson about her artwork and the creation of this issue's cover photo.

**Q What is your artistic background? What made you get into photography?**

**A ROBSON:** My background is painting, illustration and sculpting. I've been doing that ever since I was young. I had some amazing art teachers in high school. I went to college to do design/illustration and illustrated a children's book. I enjoyed it, but I found that it wasn't really my passion. My sister decided to get married three days after Christmas and I was told, "Surprise! You're the photographer. We don't have any money to pay a photographer." So I did their wedding pictures. And from there, people just started asking me to do their pictures.

I've always told people that it's just another art medium. If you understand color, if you understand lighting, angles and composition, you can make any picture look amazing. I think composition has a lot to do with my background as an artist.

**Q What was the inspiration behind the creation of our cover picture, "Tender Moments?"**

**A ROBSON:** A friend of mine, Kirsten Millsap, is an amazing songwriter. She was doing a Christmas musical project of Luke chapter two for her church. She really wanted to photograph the whole story and have it at the Christmas concert. She wrote out the storyline, then gave me a visual of what she was thinking and we worked on it together. The baby (portraying Jesus) was less than a week old. I've never taken pictures of a baby that was so peaceful, calm and reverent. That child was there for two hours and never cried.

**Q What do you like most about working with photography as a medium?**

**A ROBSON:** What I love about photography is that I can envision it, create sets – and then when I take that picture, I have a basic foundation to start with. My photos are a canvas for my finished work. I add layers and textures depending on what look I'm going for. I also love that I can close my computer and the mess is put away. My kids can't get into it and it doesn't dry out. I can take my camera anywhere and get the image I want.

**Q Do you have any history with the dairy industry?**



**A ROBSON:** Actually I milked cows as a kid. My grandparents owned a dairy farm in Wendell, Idaho. I would spend two to four weeks at their home during the summer. Sometimes we got up early with Grandpa, but most of the time we did the evening milking with him.

**Q What dairy products does your family enjoy?**

**A ROBSON:** Cheese. I have cheese on everything. I'm pregnant right now, so I crave yogurt. My three kids will drink any kind of milk, including powdered milk. We go through about 15 gallons of powdered milk per month. **PD**

*Robson lives in Tennessee. You can check out more of her artwork at [www.helenthomasrobson.com](http://www.helenthomasrobson.com)*



Left to Right: "For Tonight You Are Mine," "Washington's Worst Ordeal," "Watching Over My Children." Photos by Helen Thomas Robson.



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