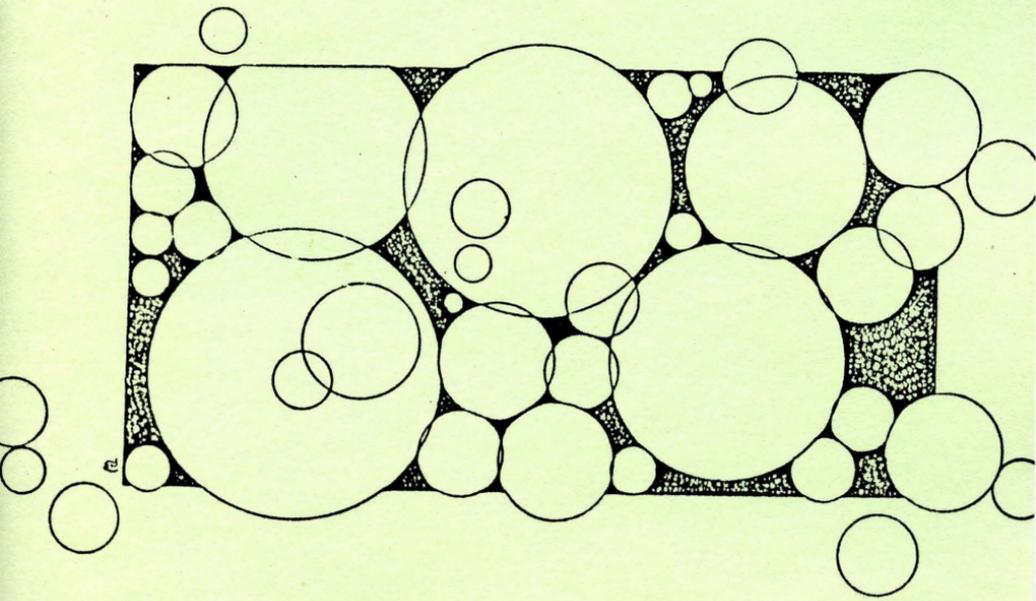
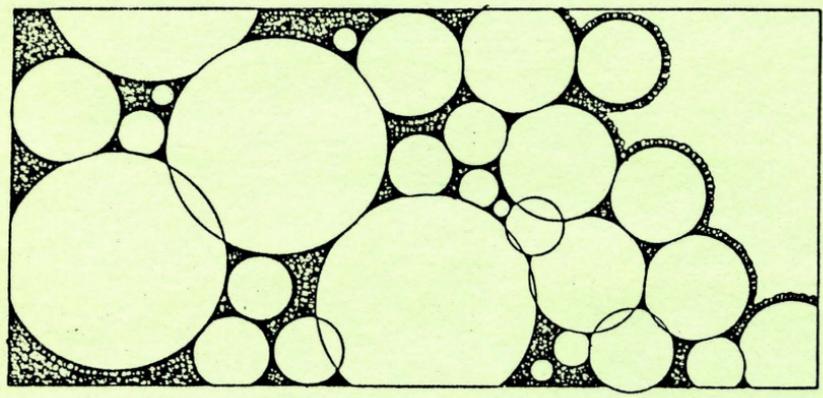
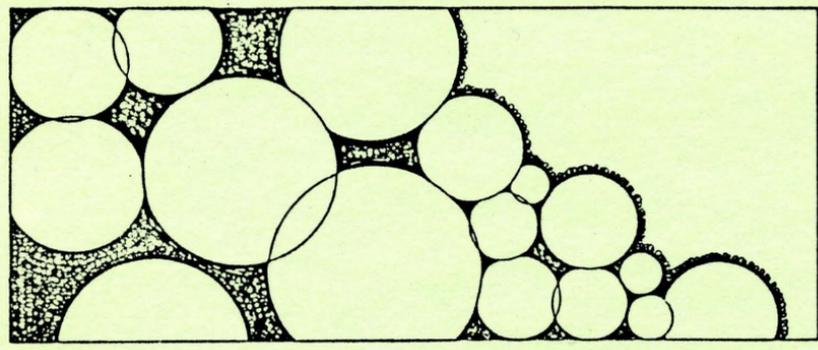
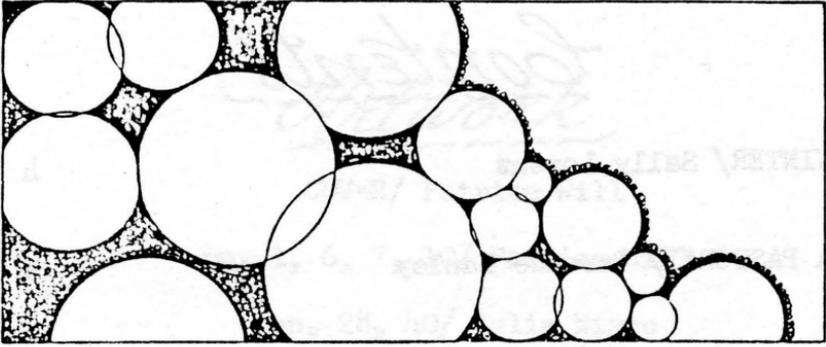


FIORETTI



83-84
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WINTER

chill hearth~

Blowing swirling freezing

Comforters colds sunshine slush

Flowering living growing

warmth renewing

SPRING

Sally Lorenz

A Pastoral

by Terence Hanley

It was hot. No one could remember when it wasn't hot. It had rained sometime-- about a month before, but it was only a spit of rain. The earth was grey dust when the rain came. A few drops fell and made little pits like moon craters, and then the rain moved on. And all the time, the sun was shining, even during the rain.

The sun wasn't up yet, but it was hot. The windows were open, but you wouldn't know it. Cooper could feel Madge near him. She wasn't more than a foot away in the dark, lying next to him on the bed. He could feel her heat and smell her and feel the sole of her foot against his leg. It was very still and dark and hot in the room.

Cooper got up and the bedsprings squeaked. He didn't hear Madge, so he knew she was awake. He pulled on his trousers and his boots; he didn't bother with a shirt. He felt there in the corner and found the gun and got a box of cartridges off the top of the dresser.

"Coop."

He looked over into the dark, but he couldn't see anything. He went out of the room and closed the door behind.

"Coop."

Madge lay awake in the dark and waited. The waiting was terrible. Her stomach churned, and she sweated, but she didn't move. It was almost a relief when the shot came. She was startled by the suddenness of it. It seemed like it went on for a long time: rushed across miles of dusty earth, struck the faraway hills and came back again. When the second shot came, she got up and slipped into a gingham dress. She went out of the room and into the kitchen.

It was dark, but not as dark as the bedroom. She turned on the stove and put the skillet down on the burner. There was still grease in it from the day before. It slowly melted as she beat the mix for the wheat cakes.

She heard a third and fourth shot.

One more.

It came.

The wheat cakes sputtered in the skillet. She turned them. She heard Coop on the porch. He came in the door and went into the bedroom. He came back without the gun and sat at the table.

Madge said, "How many do you want?"

He was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "I don't want any breakfast."

"Why not?"

"I couldn't eat now."

She turned off the fire and put the cakes on a plate. She scraped the last of the butter from a piece of wax paper and put it on the cakes. It melted and she sat across from him. She cut them up with her fork and took a bite. It didn't taste good. She couldn't eat anymore.

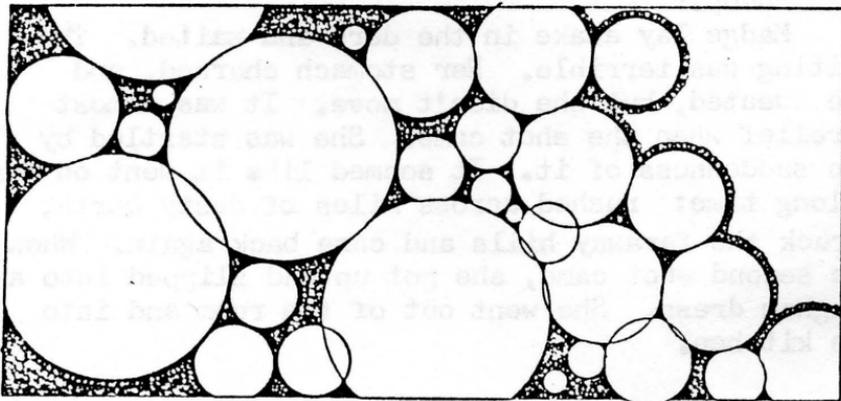
They sat across from one another. It became lighter in the room.

"What about the carcasses?" Madge said at last.

"Jim Feller said he'd haul them away for me."

"That's nice of him."

"Yeah."



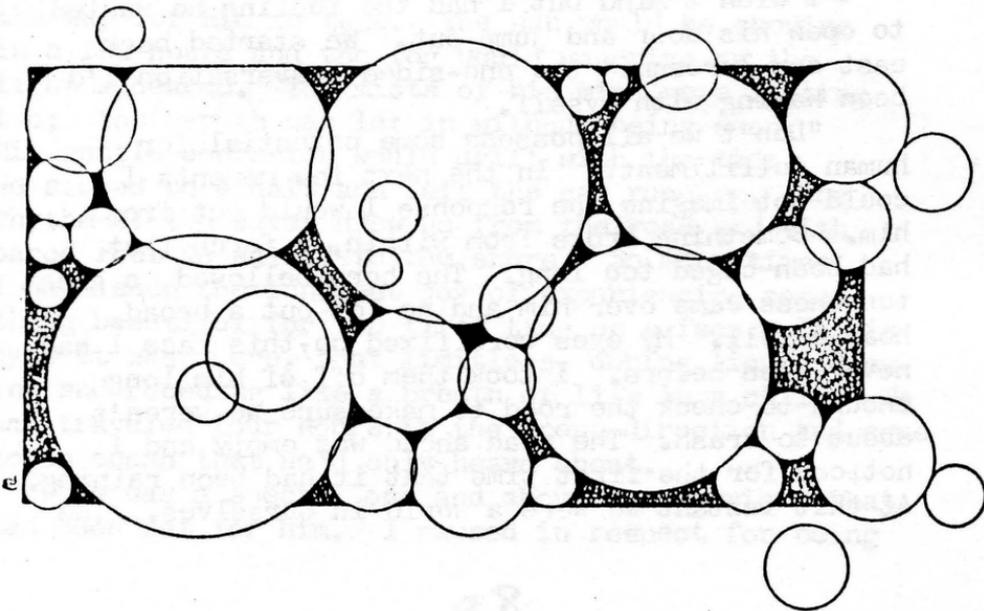
Haiku

Unexpected splash,

even the frogs have stopped...

to listen

Drew Appleby



Receding Tides

by Ellen M. Petraits

"Well, what do you think?" It was a question I felt the answer to before he drew out one of his long sighs. He was uncomfortable when he knew I was looking at him. He stared straight ahead. The uneasiness may have come from a lack of social contact or from hearing a familiar question come from someone else. He was dismissing my presence, trying to regain the security of silence we had driven in for the past half hour. I looked at him again. He shifted gears, slowed down, and pulled off to the side of the road. "You know, we're lost." I hadn't been paying attention to signs or turnoffs or anything. The night had a way of making people forget where they were going. All the cars that passed us were simply being pulled by some invisible force creating the illusion of a destination. They were all lost, some just chose not to acknowledge it.

"Should we turn around then?"

"Yeah, a long ways back I must have gotten confused, I'll turn around. Sorry about the delay."

I didn't mind but I had the feeling he wanted to open his door and jump out. We started back east and I resumed the one-sided conversation I'd been having with myself.

"Don't we all possess some potential for human fulfillment?" In the next few moments I could not imagine the response I would get from him. Something broke from within, a force that had been caged too long. The horn bellowed, a great tenseness came over him and he let out a broad, hoarse yell. My eyes were fixed on this face I had never seen before. I took them off of him long enough to check the road to make sure we weren't about to crash. The road ahead was empty and I noticed for the first time that it had been raining. At that instant we were a world in ourselves. The

limits of the car were all we knew, all we cared to know.

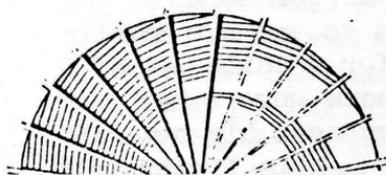
He began to talk. I listened to this new voice. The words clotted in the well of his throat and shivered as they touched the air. If it had been some other language I would have understood him no less. The words lulled me into his past. The small ones told of the emptiness the death of a brother leaves. Parents grieve for a child and kill the living one. Bigger words told of the resentment they showed toward him and what they saw as lack of concern for a child swallowed up too soon by life. There were other ways to be. Sleep and numbness cruthced him as did the music no one else cared enough to listen to.

We took a side road that had no name and drove swiftly. The pull was strong and we felt we were nearly home. I opened to the wind and let it swirl around in my head. The rain had stopped and the smell of salt danced in my lungs. The bond shared within the confines of the car was intensified by the billowing of wind uplifting us into a single spirit. The temperament of the world seemed to have been left back on the main road where the pull was between yesterday and the day preceding. This was the way for him to take. The sun would be showing in a few hours and the fog would vaporize as the light appeared. The mists of his mind were lifting too; the warmth was let in without being seen. His gentle confusion would drift with the tide. We slowed to a halt and left the car running. The rhythm of the waves drew us from the road and with bared feet we walked to the shore. So many times I have seen the innocent joy of experiencing something beautiful for the first time on a face. In his eyes it was there, that limitless, ebbing liquid drawing and receding like a breath of life in a child. We had traveled four hours in the wrong direction and come to an ocean that he'd only heard about.

He was a special one and above the barriers that had been set for him. I paused in respect for being

chosen to deliver him. Two sunbathers would find him the next day and think it a strange, sad thing.

I smiled to him, felt the growing warmth as he took my hand. We waded into the darkness together and never came out again.



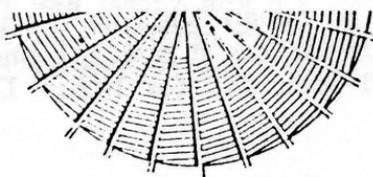
Haiku

Elevator door

opening and closing again...

without you

Drew Appleby



The Ties That Bind

by Jill Thompson

One summer, my family and I spent a week camping in a shady, wooded area near a lake. Our vacation site was in a predominately Amish, rural community. For the week that we stayed there, we bought baked goods from these people.

The temperature was well over ninety degrees as I entered the Amish bakery. If I had not been a teenager myself, perhaps I would not have paid much attention to the young girl taking loaves of hot bread from the oven and wiping her face, which was beet red, on her white apron. She looked very determined as she stood there in her long dress, with that little bonnet tied under her chin; yet there was a look of discontent on her round face. As she wrapped up our bread and cookies in brown paper, a faint smile crossed her lips. She stared at the bright, red ribbon that I had tied to my ponytail, and I noticed a wistful look in her eyes. Burning behind those big, brown eyes, there was a look of fierce pride which seemed to prevent her from saying anything. I was really quite fascinated with my Amish friend whom I named Becky.

* * * * *

Becky was awakened by the twittering songs of birds just as the early morning sun was slanting across the linoleum floor and melting away the shadows around the edges of her small, upstairs room. Sleepily, she rubbed her eyes as she sat up in bed and remembered that school was out for the summer and she had to get up extra early to work in the bakery. The first thing that her eyes focused on was the little bonnet. It

was hanging on her bedpost where she had put it the night before, as well as every other night for the past fourteen years. The reflection of light in the room made an aura around the little cap and caused Becky to feel a certain reverence for those things which were an integral part of her life. As she rose, hastily dressed, and put on the little bonnet with its ties, she thought about the other ties that held her in a world which was somehow different, so different, that Becky wasn't quite sure just how she felt about it. Now that she had finished grade school, things were certainly becoming complicated, or so it seemed.

For fourteen-year-old Becky Yoder, life had always been secure, even though it was filled with hard work. Sundays were for fun, and prayer, of course. The weekdays were for dreaming about the future while kneading bread dough, making jam, and cutting out springerles for the hoards of hungry tourists who visited the baker's shop that was run by her mother. Each summer, people came to tour the replica of an Amish farmhouse and learn about these people and their so-called "simple life." For Becky, it was not always that simple.

Since Becky had become a teenager, it seemed as though her life was becoming more confusing with each passing day. It wasn't that she was unhappy working in the bakery alongside Annie and Sarah, her older sisters, but somehow it just seemed that some little something was not quite right. Her discontent seemed to manifest itself everytime Becky thought about her last year at the Amish school. A little gnawing fear kept growing inside of her when she thought about her future as an Amish mother who would always have to run out and hide her children from the prying eyes of the tourists and their cameras just as her mother shielded Katie, her baby sister, from such incidents. Mother would always

laugh and say, "Ya, they want our Katie to be in the movies, but she doesn't need the money."

Somehow, Becky was beginning to feel like a goldfish in a bowl. Life used to be fun and filled with children's games, weekly auctions, picnics, and quilting bees. Even now, as she dusted her floury hands on her apron and leaned back against the porch rail to get a breath of air, she envied Chris and Jacob, her little brothers. She watched them hurry down the lane past Ben Glick's farm where the stream that divided his land from Yoder's provided the perfect place for wading on a hot summer day. The happy boys didn't seem to have a care in the world as they splashed in the cool water.

The sun was high overhead, and Becky could feel its heat through the flat porch roof. Work at the bakery during the summer tourist season was hard, especially when the temperature hovered around the 100-degree mark. She decided to go and sit on a rock near the stream and cool off her tired, aching feet. Since she had taken the last loaves of dark, crusty bread from the oven earlier than usual, she would have at least an hour to relax before she had to start getting supper for her brothers and sisters. Mother and the older girls were always too busy at the bakery, and Father always worked behind the horse-drawn plow until dark.

As she skipped down the path, she stopped to wipe the beads of perspiration from her face. All at once, she was startled by a small cry. As Becky stopped to listen, she saw a tiny boy perched on a log, his eyes full of tears.

"I lost Froggie," he whimpered.

"What?" asked Becky. "You are very little to be here all by yourself."

"I want my mommy and Froggie!"

Becky looked at his expensive sunsuit and

figured that he must have been left behind by one of the customers who had visited the bakery that afternoon. Forgetting all about going wading and how warm she was, she picked up the little boy and headed back to the shop. With the child seated comfortably on a high stool and a crisp sugar cookie in his hand, Becky attempted to dry his tears and console him. When he finally calmed down enough to talk, she learned that the boy's name was Robbie and that his rubber frog evidently could not swim in the place where he had thrown it. Of course, he wanted to be with his family, instead of there in the stifling hot little bakery.

As the big Winnebago pulled up in front, everyone knew what had happened. Robbie was not asleep as his parents had thought. Instead, he had gone to a secluded part of the creek, where the water was quite deep, to play with his toy frog. His parents had come outside laden with loaves of bread and sacks of goodies and had driven away.

Now, a very distraught mother was bounding up the steps of the bakery, and Becky pulled Robbie from the stool and headed him out of the screen door toward his mother. The Amish girl almost felt envious as she witnessed the little boy's mother with tears streaming down her cheeks and the little fellow clutching at her shiny, blonde hair. As Becky stood watching the reunion, her hand touched the white ties on her little cap. "The only colors I will probably ever wear are black or white, and the only way I will have my hair is in tight, fat braids," she thought. The boy's father was equally attractive in a pair of jeans, sport shirt, and tennis shoes. As the grateful couple and their boy got into the camper to leave, the Amish baker-girl began to feel those familiar pangs that made her mind race ahead to the future.

In her mind's eye, she pictured ugly, red-haired Seth Weiss from the next farm. Her parents

adored him, and of course Seth had already driven his buggy down to visit her a few times, much to Becky's consternation. They would probably raise a houseful of hungry children someday, and her bearded husband would be out in the field from morning until night behind the horse-drawn plow. (Right now, the idea of his being away from her for the entire day appealed to her immensely.) Even worse, she thought, they would have to drive to town in the old, black buggy, while cars full of seemingly happy people zipped past them. If they were very lucky, no one would yell nasty names at them, or cause an accident by colliding with the slow-moving buggy. All of these negative thoughts seemed to plague Becky, especially at times like this.

One part of her was quite content, but another part of her yearned to learn more than just eight grades of school work. She wanted to find out about the world outside before she faced a life of nothing but menial household tasks. What Becky really dreamed of was continuing her education by going to high school in the nearby town and, later on, to college. She truly wanted this education more than anything else in the world. Her mind was full of questions that she feared would never be answered. For an Amish girl, it was just a dream to be savored in quiet, private moments. It would probably never really come true anyway. She had already asked Miss Beiler, her teacher at the Amish school, about the possibility of going to high school. Her instructor for the past eight years had merely laughed and said, "Becky Yoder, you silly little goose, don't wish for things in dreams that will probably never come true. What in the world would your parents say if they could hear you now? This would shock and disappoint them for sure."

Becky remembered the day as if it were yesterday. That night, she had cried herself to sleep because, for the first time in her life, she had felt guilty and trapped for the way she thought about things. It had always given her a

delicious sense of freedom, but now this freedom was accompanied by guilt! What had she done that was really so wrong? The only consolation Becky had was that she would still be going to school in the fall. She was to be the new teacher's aide at the one-room Amish school.

Summer turned its face to golden, autumn days, and the tourist trade had slowed to a trickle, much like the stream that ran behind the bakery. It was time for the new teacher aide to go to school. Now, she would be called Miss Yoder instead of just plain, old Becky. The first days of school was always the same for all eight grades at the little, one-room, Amish school. All of the sun-burned boys wore the same broad-brimmed, flat hats and suspended trousers, and shirts like their fathers and grandfathers. The little girls were all neat as pins in their smocks and with their pigtails in a net; the older girls wore plain gray or blue dresses, white aprons, and a prayer cap on their heads.

Becky had an almost wicked thought as she trudged up the dry, dusty path on that fall morning. "Would not I just once like to take off this bonnet, run to the top of a nearby hill, and let the breeze blow through my hair." Actually, the white cap was much more comfortable than the heavy black cap worn for the Sunday preaching service.

As the schoolhouse came into view, Becky forgot her own private concerns and listened to the sound of the boys playing baseball in the school yard and the excited screams of the girls playing tag.

"Ach," she mumbled to herself, "it is really good to be back."

"Hurry up, thee will miss the fun," they called.

"I'm coming," she called. "Remember," she joked, "I'm not one of you students now. Thee should treat me with more respect, for I'm the new teacher aide."

This was the day Becky really should have been starting high school in Quarryville, instead of returning to the grade school to help Miss Beiler. She stifled her feelings of disappointment. Becky had always loved school and had felt pride, as well as joy, in learning. She was like a sponge, absorbing all she could whenever possible. Now, she felt all dried up inside as she heard the bell ring, signaling the start of school.

Many times, her teacher had told her how much she wished Becky could have the chance to learn more than she had learned at the one-room school. Unfortunately, the books were selected by a group of stuffy, old Amishmen, therefore the really good educational material was often considered "too worldly" by their standards. Her days at the school would help fill the desire to be at school once again, as well as to keep her from staying home with no outside interests. Back at the house, the women of the family were busy sewing clothes, and this was a job Becky truly detested. It was almost as bad as ironing the prayer caps, a chore that was most difficult. The last time, Becky remembered that she had scorched two of them so badly they had to be thrown away. She knew very well that such careless habits are not admired by the Old Order Amish!

Along with fall and its beauty came the hard work of getting ready for winter, and one scarcely had the time to think about anything else. Summer, as well, had been a busy time, but now there were apples and other fruits and vegetables to dry and some to store in the root cellar. There were also endless rows of canning jars yet to be filled before the Yoders could even think about resting. Winters were hard in Pennsylvania, and most of the food had to be prepared in advance so there would be plenty when the heavy snows came.

Just about the time everything was "put-up,"

the family began to prepare for Christmas. It was always quite a challenge to make and hide the special gifts for everyone. Father made the little ones wooden toys, and Mother knitted warm scarves, caps, and mittens for each member of the family. Becky was laboring over a cross--stitch sampler designed with little caricatures of the whole Yoder clan, along with their birth dates. It was very difficult to keep her surprise out of sight until Christmas. The season was quite jolly, even though there was no Christmas tree or Santa Claus. The children looked forward to a special tradition. Before going to bed on Christmas Eve, each child put a dish at their place on the table. Mother and Father always filled each dish with candy and nuts which were quickly gobbled up by the happy children on Christmas morning.

At noon, there was a mouth-watering dinner of roast turkey, baked oysters, mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes, cole slaw, pickled beets, bread and freshly churned butter, homemade jam, and a wonderful assortment of pies, cakes, and cookies. The meal was a festive occasion with plenty of time for laughter and visiting. Becky's grandparents came and, as always, brought with them a large sack of peppermints to be enjoyed after the hearty meal. One of the best things about Christmas time was the candy. All of the Yoders, even little Katie and the boys, loved to pull taffy. The holidays were such a happy time that Becky almost forgot about the problems that had seemed so unsurmountable in the fall.

The dark days of January brought bitter cold, and with it came ice-cutting time. For the boys, this was always very exciting. The men of the community all gathered together to help each other cut ice from the nearby farm ponds. They used a big saw powered by a gasoline motor to

cut out huge chunks of ice. These large pieces lasted until fall, depending upon how hot it got during the summer. To the boys, who were only allowed to watch, the roar of the saw motor (one of the few conveniences permitted) was one of the most exciting sounds they had ever heard. In fact, they usually talked about it until the ice melted toward the end of summer.

For the girls, it was a time for fun because they always went sledding. Becky and her sister Annie had gone off together for an afternoon of sliding in the snow on their homemade sleds. They felt quite fortunate because little Katie and Sarah were confined to bed with the sniffles. After about an hour, Annie decided to head for home. She was cold and wet.

"Ach, mein toes, they feel near to frozen."

"Probably thee is catching a cold like our sisters," answered Becky who felt almost happy about the prospect of being left alone to enjoy the beautiful, winter scenery. Besides, she knew that the Miller boy was coming over to borrow some tools from Father. He was visiting quite often, and common sense told Becky that in the spring her sister would most likely be preparing for her wedding day. Amish boys and girls always found little ways to meet each other and excuses to go for buggy rides. She felt quite happy to know that Seth had not been over to borrow anything. This was a relief for Becky who had enough other things to think about without the big red-head complicating things anymore than they already were.

Just as she turned to see Annie disappear over a hill on the way home, a loud scream made Becky jerk her head around just in time to see a collision. A sled had just come from the other direction and crashed into a nearby tree. Becky hurried over to see if she could help.

"Is thee hurt?"

"No," came the reply, "just a wee bit shaken."

Who are you?"

"I'm Becky Yoder, and I live on the farm over there across the field on the other side of that big hill." She pointed as she spoke.

"We just moved in nearby," replied the girl. She looked about the same age as Becky. "There are no hills near my home, so I came over here to go sledding. It is really quite a distance for me to walk, and I am beginning to get cold. I should have dressed much warmer. Since I am about frozen, I'm going to head for home. I do hope we can be friends. We just moved in around here, and I don't know a soul. By the way, my name is Mary Jane. Let's meet here tomorrow at two o'clock."

The girl talked so fast that Becky just nodded without thinking. Later, as she headed for home, the problem became evident. How in the world would she manage to get out alone tomorrow afternoon. Her parents would not want her to have a friend from the "outside world."

Before the sun rose the next morning, Becky was already thinking about meeting Mary Jane. She could hardly wait until the chores were finished so that she could slip away. It seemed as if the afternoon dragged on even longer than the morning. As she hurried through the dishes from the noon meal, Becky knew that she would only have a short time to visit with her new friend. If she was gone by herself too long, or too often, the family would miss her and become suspicious. They must never find out about her new friend because Mary Jane was not Amish. This one simple fact, as later explained to Mary Jane, was very difficult for her unprejudiced, young mind to assimilate.

"I can't see what difference it could possibly make," she laughed.

"Thee could never understand. We are different and the older folks think if the young ones, like me, have other friends that we will want

to leave home and see how the rest of the world really lives."

"Do you want to see how the rest of us live?" teased Mary Jane.

Things went along rather smoothly for the next few weeks, and Becky managed to sneak out now and then. It was such fun to have a special friend who knew about all sorts of things, especially high school. Mary Jane was a freshman at Quarryville High, and Becky had probably asked her at least a million questions during the past month. By this time, the girls had become good friends, and Mary Jane invited Becky to her house for the weekend. They decided to visit Becky's house first and ask for permission from her parents. Becky should have known better, for when she brought Mary Jane to the house and asked about visiting her new friend, Mr. Yoder's "nein" was so loud and so emphatic that even the canning jars on the shelves shook. Mrs. Yoder was equally unsympathetic to the idea. Becky ran outside as her shocked friend left the house.

"I'll come to visit thee for the weekend, no matter what! Meet me at the fence tomorrow at six o'clock."

The next day was Friday, and Becky had made up her mind to run away. She packed a nightgown, toothbrush, and her little prayer cap into a pillowcase and slipped quietly out the front door while everyone was in the kitchen finishing supper. As she walked through the early evening darkness, the sound of happy voices from the kitchen rang in her ears. For the life of her, she could not understand why she had bothered to pack her white cap. It was obvious that she would not be needing it. Mary Jane was waiting outside for her with some clothes she had borrowed from a friend. If Becky would wear these, maybe no one would guess that she was Amish.

"This is the best way," she explained to Becky as they were hurrying through the woods.

When her Amish friend saw the jeans, t-shirt, and tennis shoes, the full impact of what she was doing hit her like a huge, gray wall closing in on all sides. The wall was built of prejudice and differences that would probably never be dissolved, and certainly, she didn't have the time right now to dwell on these uncomfortable thoughts. For the first time in her life, the years of a strict Amish up-bringing made her see everything from a different perspective.

"Oh, well," she reasoned, "it's too late now to turn back. I'll just have to make the best of it and enjoy myself." Her thoughts were interrupted by Mary Jane.

"Hey, Beck, you'll have to try and hold down those 'thees' and 'thous' or my mother will really get hyper."

Her friend laughed and replied, "I'll try not to sound so Amish, and I will try to keep all of my words in the right order."

"Thee are terrific, and I will see to it that thou has fun," joked Mary Jane.

By this time, both girls were howling with laughter, and this helped them to escape a rather tense moment. Becky and Mary Jane sneaked into the garage so the new wardrobe could be tried. Everything fit fine, and in a few minutes, the new Becky was ready to go into the house and meet the Foster family.

The weekend proved to be quite an experience. The ride in the car to see a movie was, for Becky "Schroeder" (the name was for safety's sake), the realization of an almost life-long dream. If she had been a Weavertown Amish like her cousin Carolyn Eicher, the car ride would not have made her feel like such a sinner. These breakaway types who followed the teachings of Moses Beachy had automobiles, electricity, and even used tractors on their farms. Her family had scorned the Eichers for not following Old Order Amish ways; now, she herself had become as one of them. As the car

sped along the highway between Quarryville and Lancaster, Becky remembered that her parents had said the Eicher farm was along this road. She looked at the brightly lighted windows of the houses as they passed by and wondered if Cousin Carolyn and her family were inside one of them. Were they happy knowing that they had been shunned by the rest of the family? Oh, how she wished she could talk to Carolyn right now; then perhaps some of her questions would be answered. Maybe someday her chance would come.

There is no way possible to describe Becky's feelings about the movie. Her eyes and ears could not believe what they had seen and heard; yet she was thoroughly entranced with what she had just experienced. After the movie, they were treated to a pizza by Mrs. Foster. She had decided to make sure the girls had a little fun because she only made the trip to Lancaster once a month in order to shop. The stores in Quarryville were not as well-stocked as those in the city. The pizza was always a special treat. As they sat at the table with the red checkered cloth, Becky was apprehensive. Soon, the treat was served, and to the Amish girl, it looked like a giant wagon wheel. As Mary Jane started to eat, Becky got the idea and was soon enjoying the pizza as much as if not more than anyone else present. Just as she was tasting the cola drink, which was another new experience, she noticed a small boy at the next table. He was staring intently in her direction.

All at once a little voice said, "Mommy, Daddy, look. There is my cookie girl!"

Becky almost choked on the drink.

"What's the matter? Is it too bitey?" whispered Mary Jane.

"No," said Becky, praying that Robbie would not try to attract any more attention than he already had. She was certainly grateful that Mrs. Foster had not yet arrived. After dropping the girls off at the restaurant to order the

pizza, she had left to finish one more errand. They expected her to return and join them any minute.

"I hope Mom hurries, the pizza is getting cold," said Mary Jane. "Do you know those people over there? They keep looking at you as if they have seen you before."

"They have," whispered Becky.

"Hi, do you remember us?" Mrs. Marshall approached Becky. "I didn't hardly recognize you in those clothes. Why if it hadn't been for our little son here, we would have never noticed you. You look so different without your little cap." The lady's hand flew to her mouth in embarrassment. "Oh, my, I do hope that I haven't hurt your feelings by mentioning the cap. I really didn't mean anything by it. It's just that..."

"No, of course not," stammered Becky. "This is my friend Mary Jane, and I may as well tell you, if you haven't already guessed. I sneaked out for the weekend. My folks would kill me for sure if they knew."

"Well, honey," said Robbie's mother hesitantly, "I know it must be boring there with no lights or modern conveniences and all that work. Oh, I'm afraid I've said too much. It's just that I have wondered about you many times since last summer. You just don't seem like the type to spend your life slaving away in that bakery. Robbie is always talking about the time he was lost. If you hadn't found him, who knows what would have happened. I'm a teacher at the high school here in Lancaster. If you ever decide to continue your education, you could stay with us and go to school here. Robbie likes you so much, and he needs a good baby sitter. I could teach you so many things. I've always wanted a daughter. You would be a most welcome addition to our family for as long as you care to stay with us."

"Oh, Mrs. Marshall," stammered Becky, "I don't really know what I want. I shouldn't even

be here now. Something has always made me feel so different. I really love being a teacher aide at the Amish school, but I would like to be able to learn more. There is so much I don't know about so many things."

As the Marshalls left the restaurant, Mrs. Marshall handed Becky a little piece of paper. "Here is our address and telephone number. Think about what I've said. Of course, I would want to talk to your parents if you decide that you would like to come and stay with us for a while. I think I could make them understand."

"I doubt it," said Becky, "but I will think about it. Perhaps, you could stop by the bakery this summer. Maybe then I will have my thoughts in order. Right now, I'm just too confused about what I want."

"Bye,bye," whispered Robbie as he kissed her on the cheek. "I hope I get to see you again."

By this time, Mrs. Foster had arrived, and as they finished the pizza, she told them about her shopping trip. She had bought Mary Jane some new clothes for Easter. "I do wish Easter bonnets were still in style. I loved them so much, with all their bright flowers and pretty colored ribbons. I'll bet your mother remembers them too, doesn't she dear?"

"Yes, I suppose," was all that Becky could squeak out for a reply.

The pizza felt like lead in her stomach as they drove back to Quarryville. That night, as she lay in a strange bed thinking about home, her heart was heavy. She stared at the pink ruffled shade of the lamp on the little table next to the bed, and a large tear slid down her cheek. As she clutched her pillow, the little string from her bonnet that was inside of the pillowcase wrapped around her finger.

The next morning she decided to go home and "face the music." Mary Jane also acted as if she was going to crack under the strain. The tension was beginning to show on both of the girls. The

next morning they decided to confide in Mrs. Foster. She would be understanding, they thought. Needless to say, she was not; and when the Foster car arrived at the Yoder farm, two sets of very irate parents met for the first and last time. A beautiful friendship had ended (for the time being), but from it a new, more determined Becky emerged.

Spring was beginning to show in the trees around the farm. The smell of fresh maple syrup was in the air. It was almost time for school to end for the year. In the Yoder family, Chris would now be old enough to help with the spring planting, and Annie was planning her wedding in May. It was almost time for work at the bakery to commence. The tourist season would soon be bringing hungry visitors to the farm.

Becky ran down the path toward home, with her bonnet strings flying behind her. Summer would be fun, and even though she had not completely made a decision about when she was going to complete her education, she could see her dreams becoming reality. Best of all, she had a little piece of paper in her pocket that gave her a choice between working with Mrs. Beiler next fall, or moving in with the Marshall family in Lancaster. That little scrap of paper was her ticket to freedom. If she chose to stay, she could probably apply for a real teaching position at an Amish school when she was eighteen years old. If she chose the little piece of paper and went to live with the Marshalls, her life would be changed considerably. In her heart, she knew what her decision would be. She also knew that she would have to talk to her cousin, Carolyn Eicher, before she would have any peace of mind. Her major concern for the present was the effect that her decision would have on her family. She really did love all of them. Either way, she would eventually have to leave.

Right now, the farm looked beautiful after the spring rain. The snow had melted away, and new life was pushing through the soft earth, eager for a chance to grow. Becky would never forget, as long as she lived, the winter of her fourteenth year. It was truly her own special time for growing. For the first time in many months, she was content.

As Becky put on her little cap and headed for the bakery, she caught herself humming a little tune. Now, as she kneaded the bread, which would undoubtedly end up in a car just as she had on that winter night last February, she realized that she had finally begun to view her own life in its proper perspective.

Haiku

The first day of spring ~

my neighbor's door

stands ajar

Drew Appleby



Mischief

A brown, cuddly, dark
excited, frolicsome
gerbil hopped into
Joan's knapsack.

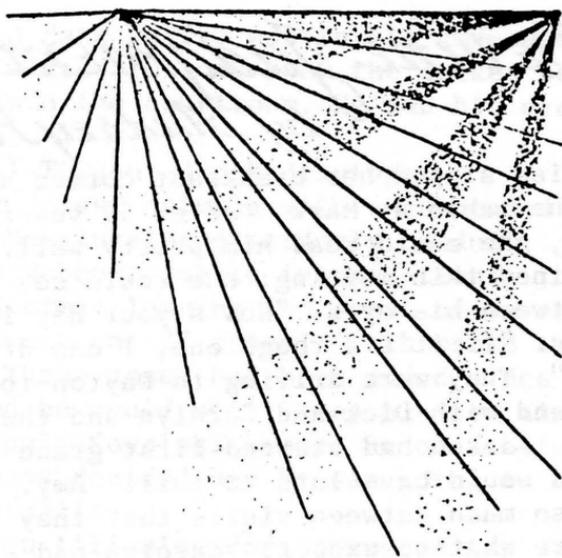
Lying meekly nestled
on papers, "Quibbles"
rapidly shredded,
tore up volumes
with x-haustingly
youthful zest.

Julie Nigro

The Brushes Are Dry

*Red sable and china bristle,
the brushes are dry;
solvent-cleansed and so
carefully stored,
they are now detached.*

*Canvas and palette shall never
have
the paint's fresh presence;
the artist's steady hand and
mind
are forever removed.*



*The brushes are dry,
but the works remain.
Absence cannot destroy what
we shared.
Father, a graced man and
ever-present friend,
you painted our lives with
love's color ~*

Michael

De Vine Judgment

by *Audrey Pearson*

Louise sipped her breakfast coffee and smiled across the table at Mark. After 39 years of marriage, she could read him pretty well. He was strained this morning; she could see the little lines between his eyes. "How's your day look?" she asked. "If it's a rough one, I can drive this evening." They were driving to Dayton to spend the weekend with Dick and Carolyn and the grandchildren. Jason had started first grade this fall, and would have lots to tell. Amy, at two, changed so much between visits that they weren't quite sure what to expect. Carolyn had said she was talking in sentences now, and Louise could hardly wait to see her. She'd bought each of them a new outfit this week, and Mark had come home last night with Hershey bars for them. They were looking forward to the visit.

Mark met the direct brown eyes and knew she had sensed his tension. He loved her very much; life had been full and good for them. "Not too bad," he answered. "Heavy load this morning with that smart aleck kid Kowalski for the prosecution. Really gripes me, the way he manipulates the law instead of respecting it. If he's late again, I'm gonna dismiss his cases. I'm tired of fooling with him. But the afternoon is free. In fact, Jack and I are playing golf at one."

"Nine holes, or eighteen?"

"Just nine. I should be home around four. Don't you think that gives us enough time?"

"Should be plenty. Carolyn said we'd have dessert after we get there. I thought I'd make some sandwiches for us to eat in the car."

"Sounds fine." Mark wiped his mouth on his napkin and stood up. "I have to get going. I'm due in court at nine."

Judge Mark DeVine was in his chambers by 8:25. He wanted to look over the docket before he went into the courtroom. He ran his eye down the page:

Michael Tilden: drunk driving;

Harvey Jones: driving with a suspended license;

Harry Massingale: disorderly conduct;

Beulah Webber: public intoxication;

Carl Storms: leaving the scene of an accident.

The list went on: 27 cases! This would take all morning! Three cases had been added since yesterday. Mark hoped he could still keep his tee time with Jack. If only Kowalski showed up on time! Well, he'd already decided how he was going to handle that eventuality.

At ten till nine Mark answered tap at the door. Rod Stevens, the baliff, was there. "Good morning, Judge."

"Hi, Rod. Come on in. Are all the defendants and their attorneys here?"

"Yes, sir! Quite a big group out there this morning. And everybody showed up today, too."

"Is Kowalski here?"

"No, sir. Haven't seen him yet." The baliff looked at his watch. "He should be here any minute."

"Well, I'm ready," Judge DeVine said. "I'll be in right at nine."

"Yes, sir." Rod went out, and Mark put things in order on his desk.

Promptly at nine o'clock, Mark DeVine entered the courtroom.

"All rise," droned Rod's voice. As Mark sat down, the baliff droned again: "Be seated."

The first case was called: "The People vs. Michael Tilden." The defense attorney and his client, a young man in his early twenties, took their places at the table. No one came forward for the prosecution.

Judge DeVine addressed the courtroom. "Is the counsel present for the prosecution?" The

room was silent. "Here we go again," thought the judge. "Kowalski gets 27 cases lined up, and then doesn't bother to be here himself. I've had it with him!" Aloud he repeated his request: "Will counsel for the prosecution please come forward?" Still no response. Mark glanced down at the papers in front of him: "Tilden, Michael; age 24; arrested for driving under the influence, September 7." He looked around the room again, then at the clock above the door. He'd already decided what to do, but now he hesitated. Still, Kowalski sometimes arrived late just to bait him, he was sure. Well, this was the last straw.

Mark raised the gavel and brought it down sharply. "Case dismissed," he said. "All cases dismissed." He rose and strode from the room. He barely heard the drone of Rod's voice as he asked the filled courtroom to rise.

Jack Langford was taking his clubs out of the truck when Mark drove in. He pulled up next to him and climbed out of the car. "Hey, Jack! How's it goin'?"

"Hi, Mark! I'm okay! You ready to defend your title?"

"You bet! I'll be hard to beat today!"

Both men laughed as they secured their bags to their golf carts and started for the clubhouse. Mark liked Jack. They'd been neighbors for 25 years, and their children had grown up together. Jack had done well in the insurance business, and now was the head of his own independent agency. Both men were nearing retirement, but neither thought about it much. They were both involved in responsible jobs which they enjoyed. Life had a steady rhythm, and neither of them sought to change it. When they were both in town and the weather cooperated, they played golf at least once a week.

"Got time for a sandwich before we tee off?"

"Sounds good! Louise and I are driving to Dayton tonight, and she's fixing sandwiches to

take in the car. Guess I'll have a cheese-burger. She won't fix that."

"Probably not! If it were Evelyn, I could count on ham and cheese."

Mark had shot and even par on the front nine. He'd had two bogeys, but made up for them with birdies on two and five. He was feeling very good about his game as he turned into the driveway. He saw as the garage door went up that Louise's car was gone. "Hmmm! Thought she'd want to leave right away."

When he got inside, he found a note on the kitchen table:

Honey--

Have run to the store for
pumpernickel and Swiss. Be
right back!

Love,

L.

He went to the refrigerator and got a cold Coke. He glanced through the mail while he drank: the phone bill, Louise's House Beautiful, and three pieces of advertising. He didn't know how long it would take Louise at this time of day, but he probably had time for a shower. Carrying his Coke with him, he went up to their bedroom.

Mark listened for Louise while he was toweling off, but he didn't hear her yet. He studied his chin in the mirror and decided to shave again. He hummed to himself while he shaved, then dressed in clean khaki pants and a comfortable knit sport shirt. He went downstairs.

In the front hall he saw the suitcases Louise had obviously meant for him to put in the car. Her light blue coat was lain carefully across them. "Louise?" he called. No answer. The suitcases must have been there all the time; he just hadn't seen them before. He laid her coat across his arm, picked up the two suitcases, and headed for the garage. He saw the candy bars and the boxes with Jason's and Amy's new

outfits in them on a chair in the family room and made a mental note to come back for them.

He had arranged things to his satisfaction in the car and come back into the kitchen when the doorbell rang. As he opened the door, he was surprised to see Jack Langford and two uniformed policemen on the porch. Jack's face was drawn. He reached out and grasped Mark's shoulder.

"Jack! What the..."

The taller of the two policemen spoke. "Judge Mark DeVine?"

"Yes."

"May we come in, please, sir?"

"What is all this? Jack, are you in trouble?"

"No, Mark. You better let us in."

"Yes, yes. Here, come on into the living room. Sit down, won't you? What's all this about?"

The officers each took a chair, and Jack steered Mark to the sofa and sat down beside him. The tall policeman spoke again. "It's your wife, sir. She's been involved in an automobile accident. We asked Mr. Langford to come over so you'd have someone with you."

"Is she all right? Where is she?"

"She's been killed, sir. I'm sorry."

"Killed? Louise? How? What happened? I found a note that she was going to the grocery store."

"Yes, sir. She was about a block from the store when it happened. Groceries were in the back seat."

Mark was stunned, incredulous. He couldn't quite take it in. He looked at Jack, then back at the two policemen. "But what happened?" he asked again.

"Drunk driver, sir. Hit her broadside. She never had a chance."

"Drunk driver? Out on the streets at this time of day? Who was it? What was his name?"

"Let's see here, sir. I have it on the arrest report. Here it is. Tilden, sir: Michael Tilden."

A Poem

Locked in a classroom,
the sun shines brightly.
Long slender girls; sharp
pointed elbows—
Death in another sphere of life.
Newspapers litter the floor.
Awards will soon be given,
causing some to wonder.
Desks strewn haphazardly
in aisles once straight.
Get back, honky cat—
Teacher speaking endlessly; words
fall on deaf ears.
Altered states of consciousness
beckon as the weekend approaches.
Life in the fast lane.
Yeh, yeh, yeh.

Jack Groves

The Great White Bird

*Silently sailing through an ocean
of sky~*

*Slowly descending
lower,*

lower,

lower,

*Gracefully gliding in a majestic arc
across the horizon~*

*Guiding its nose toward its final
destination~home~*

*With the sun showering brilliant
rays of light across the Ship's
shimmering metallic tiles~*

*A white trail of smoke comes
pouring out its tail
after a LOUD SONIC BOOM*

*Gradually fading off into the
distance~*

Signaling the spectators of the Ship's
final approach to land.

Everything is quiet:
Ship drifts

down,

down,

down,

As the colors of trees and shrubs
and lakes and rivers
slip into the background.

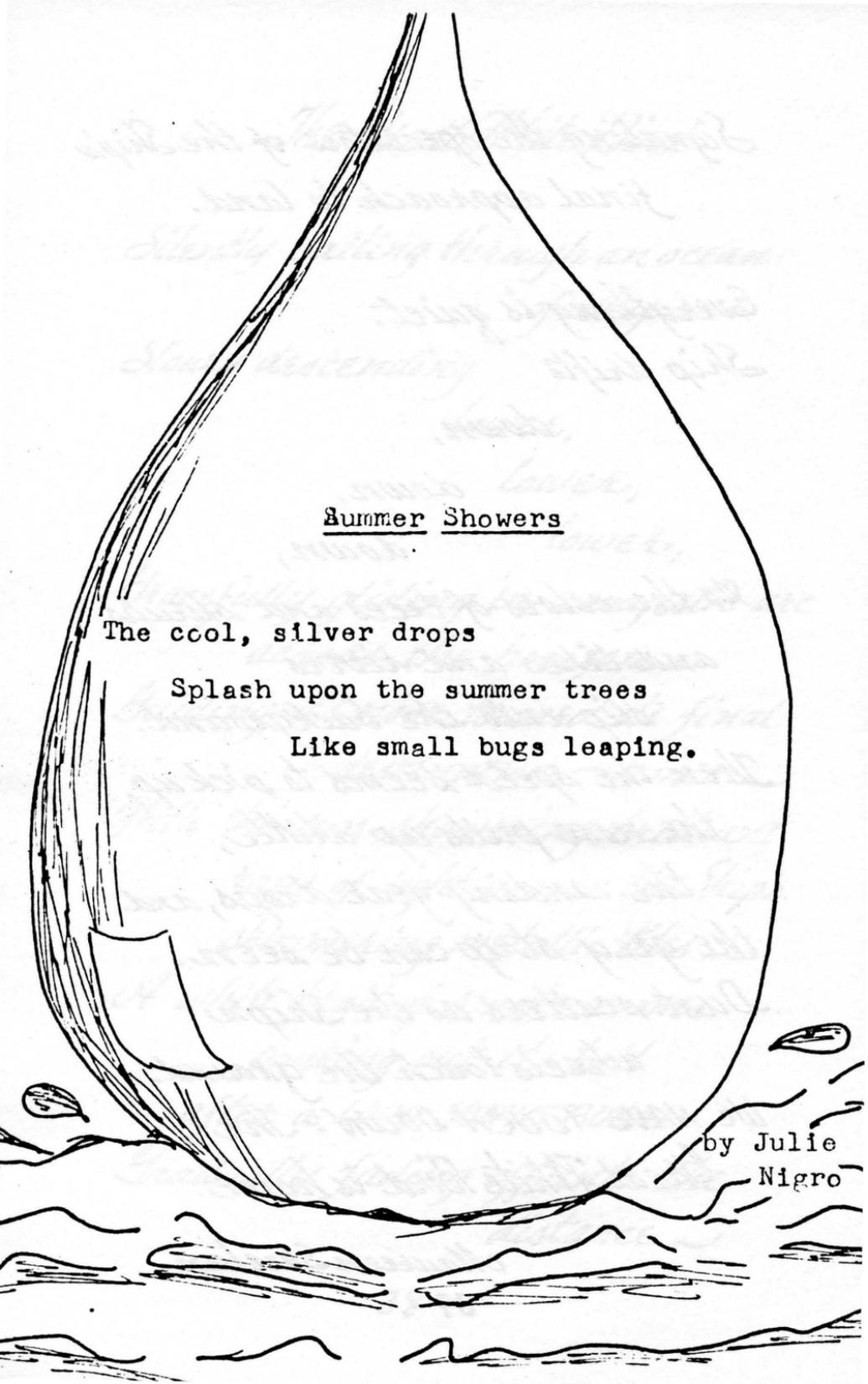
Then the speed seems to pick up,
the nose pulls up a little,

the landing gear drops, and
the grey strip can be seen.

Dust scatters as the Ship's
wheels touch the ground.

WE HAVE TOUCH DOWN: The
Great White Bird is home.

Mauveen Sheehan



Summer Showers

The cool, silver drops

Splash upon the summer trees

Like small bugs leaping.

by Julie
Nigro

