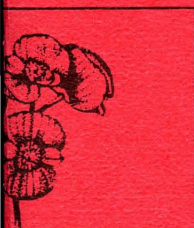




Fioretti



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a literary anthology

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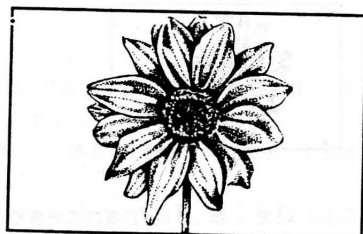
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NOTE: This school year marks the Fioretti's golden anniversary. We appreciate all the contributions that we have received and welcome new submissions for our next edition.



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The Fioretti de S. Francesco d'Assisi, Little Flowers of Saint Francis, is the name of a classic collection of popular legends about St. Francis and his early companions as they appeared to the Italian people at the beginning of the 14th century. These historic tales recreate the early Franciscan spirit, replete with poetry. The Canticle of the Sun, St. Francis' well-known poem, voices that spirit eloquently.

The Canticle of Brother Sun
a translation

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor
And all blessing.

To you alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy
To pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that
you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us
through him.

How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his
splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister
Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright
And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers
Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's
moods,
By which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister
Water,
So useful, lowly, precious, and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother
Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful he is, how gay! Full of power
and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister
Earth,
our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits and colored flowers and
herbs.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those
who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord. through Sister
Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

St. Francis of Assisi



A CHILD'S FAITH

By Deardra Webb

That summer of 1948 when I was nine began differently from the summers past. Sister Cecelia told us a month before school ended that if we promised to come faithfully to Mass every weekday at 8:30, we would be allowed to learn to sing the Mass and, most importantly, to sing up in the choir loft. What a great honor! Mary Ann, who was my very best friend then, and I promised--and so the Summer began. Before it ended it would prove to be the longest of my life.

That first morning Mother woke me at 7:15.

"Angie, time to get up. Are you sure you want to get up every morning? You know you could sleep a little later, now that school is out."

"Oh, Mother, Mary Ann and I are so excited," I said as I jumped out of bed. "We get to be up in the choir loft. Some of the older kids will be there, too. Sister Cecelia said this is the first time ever that kids our age are allowed up there. Could I wear my new pink skirt and blouse?"

While I got dressed, Mother was fixing breakfast for Paulie, my little four-year-old brother. The baby, Mikey, was asleep. My father, who worked for the telephone company, was always up and gone before I got up.

After getting ready I went to the kitchen.

"Angie, are you going to school?" Paulie asked.

"No, I'm going to Mass. I'll be home soon and we'll play. You eat all your breakfast like a good boy."

"You wait until Mary Ann comes, Angie,

and you two stay together and come home together," Mother said.

"I will, Mother. Oh! I can hardly wait! We practiced in the choir a couple of days, but this will be a real Mass."

Mary Ann came and we started off, chattering all the way, feeling extremely important. It was every bit as thrilling as we had imagined. Our small voices blended in with those of the other children. Imagine, fourth graders being allowed to sing with fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Afterwards, outside the church, one eighth grade girl even told us we had done a good job. We walked home about eight feet off the ground.

"Can you come over later, Mary Ann?" I asked.

"As soon as I eat breakfast and change clothes, unless Mother wants me to do something," Mary Ann replied.

At home I found Paulie dressed and playing with his trucks in the dining room.

"Can you play now. Angie?" he asked eagerly.

"As soon as I eat and change clothes. Mary Ann might come over and we'll play house. You can be the little boy."

"I don't wanna be the little boy. I want to be the daddy and drive a truck," Paulie insisted.

"Oh, okay, you can be the daddy today."

While eating breakfast, Mother reminded me we were going to Chesterton the following weekend to my grandparents'. I loved visiting them, but probably the biggest attraction there was my ten-year-old cousin Joey. He and his mother my Aunt Rose lived with my Grandparents in their big Victorian house. Joey's father Uncle Frank had been killed toward the end of the Second World War. Aunt

Rose and Joey had moved back home so Aunt Rose could "get on her feet" as she put it. After three years she had never quite made it.

Joey was my very favorite cousin. The thing that always intrigued me about him was that he always thought of things to do that never would have entered my mind. Last summer when I was visiting, Joey had the idea of taking our notebooks up to the town square and writing down license plate numbers of all the cars parked there. He said we could help the Sheriff out this way.

He was fascinated with detectives at this time. The jail, sheriff's office and sheriff's apartment were right across the street from my grandparent's house, a fact that strongly contributed to Joey's interest.

So up the hill we trooped, tablets in hand, to play detectives. The town square was only a block away. My grandmother had given us money for ice cream and a warning to look both ways before crossing the street.

"Joey, how many cars do you think we should do?" I asked.

"All of them. How else can the Sheriff tell if there are any crooks in town. Police have a special way of looking up numbers in their big books," Joey replied.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"Because I heard it on "Superman." Don't you ever listen to it? It tells you all kinds of neat stuff."

I had to admit that that radio program was not part of my weekly listening as yet.

It took us about an hour to write down all the numbers, each of us taking turns. When we finished we were in front of Pinky's, a rather unique store on the square. Pinky was a pharmacist and filled prescriptions, but

he also sold cigarettes, tobacco, candy, gum, and ice cream, a rather add combination. There were two regular drugstores in town, but Joey and I preferred Pinky's. He always took time to talk to us and sometimes gave us a two-scoop ice cream cone and only charged us for one scoop.

The day we did our detective work was a hot one and the ice cream tasted wonderful. Finished, we left with our important detective work to be delivered.

"Joey, do you think Sheriff Klein will be glad we did this, maybe even give us an award?"

Joey looked at me as if he wondered about my sanity. "You mean reward, and we can't tell him who did this. We'll just slip it in the door, ring the bell and run. That's what Superman would do! He sometimes does undercover stuff and doesn't tell anyone."

Sometimes Joey's thinking confused me, but he was my idol so we ran up the steps, pushed our pages of license plate numbers under the door, rang the bell and hid in the bushes. The Sheriff's wife came to the door, looked out, saw no one and started to turn away, then she saw the note paper. She picked it up and murmured something we couldn't hear and walked back in the house.

After a while it was getting hot in the bushes.

"Come on, Joey, let's go. Grandma will wonder where we are."

"Okay, Angie, I think it's safe now."

We crept out and across the street to Grandma's porch. Unfortunately, we never found out if our afternoon's work helped Sheriff Klein in his pursuit of justice. Most likely it did give him a good laugh, though.

Another idea Joey had was how to retrieve

money from the drain grate over the sewer. Grandma had given us money for the matinee at the Boncastle, the nicest movie theater on the square. She had given each of us a quarter--fifteen cents for admission and ten cents for popcorn. We were excited. A new Roy Rogers movie was playing plus the sixth chapter of the current serial, Buster Crabbe in "Jungle Woman."

Just as we started to cross the street I dropped one of my dimes. It rolled to the grating and dropped though. We ran to see if we could see it and there it was--about four feet below us.

"I know how we can get it," Joey said. "You go to Pinky's and buy some gum and start chewing it. I'll go back to the garage. Grandpa keeps stakes behind it to tie up tomato plants. I'll be back."

I was bewildered at Joey's instructions, but I followed them. When he returned I was standing on the corner, chomping away on the gum.

"Now," he said, "gimme the gum."

Obediently and silently I took it out and handed it to him. He put it on the end of the stick and lowered it into the grate.

"Now watch, Angie. The dime will stick to the gum and we'll pull it up."

It sounded quite logical when Joey explained it to me. Sure enough the silver we saw stuck to the gum and there it came. We grabbed for the dime, only to find it wasn't a dime after all, but a piece of tin foil.

"Well," Joey said, "let's try again."

We spotted another piece of silver glinting at us. We pushed the stick down again--and again only retrieved tin foil.

"I think I really see it this time," he

said, looking towards the corner of the hole.

Pushing the stick down a third time, the gum was losing its gumminess. At first the silver wouldn't stick. Finally we got it, feeling at last we had it. Again, however, it was tin foil.

"Joey, let's go back and ask Grandma for another dime or we'll miss the movie," I said.

"Oh, okay, Angie, but I bet we could get it if we tried just a couple more times," he said hopefully.

"Joey," I said firmly, "you have good ideas, but I want to see Roy Rogers and we'll miss him if we don't get going."

Grandma gave us the extra dime and we had a great time watching Roy Rogers who, with the help of Gabby Hayes, put the "bad guys" in jail.

So Joey and I had a very close relationship. We were lucky enough not only to be related, but to be good friends as well. When Mother told me we were going to Chesterton, I was very excited.

Going to Chesterton was always quite an expedition, even for the weekend. My mother had to pack the playpen for Mikey, the baby buggy, besides all the diapers and clothes and baby bottles. It was a real feat of maneuvering on her part. My father was working that weekend so he couldn't go. My job was to entertain Paulie in the back seat for the hour drive. I read to him, and we colored.

We arrived at about 4:00. Joey and Grandma came out to greet us.

"Angie, Angie, glad you're here," Joey yelled.

Grandma hugged us all. Grandpa hadn't come home yet. He had a small produce market

about three blocks away where he was kept busy selling the freshest fruit and vegetables in town.

"Where's Rose?" my mother asked.

"She's upstairs," Joey said. "She has a headache again."

"Joey," Grandma said, "help Aunt Katherine carry in some of her things."

After we got all of our paraphernalia inside Grandma said, "Joey, you and Angie stay here. We'll be eating soon."

"Come on, Angie, I want to show you something," said Joey.

We went upstairs. Grandma's house had five bedrooms. Nine children had once lived here, my father among them. They were all gone except Aunt Rose, either married, working in the city, or in school. My father's youngest sister, Anna, who was only eleven years older than I, had just begun nursing school in the city.

Joey's room was so sunny and bright that summer afternoon. He had twin beds. In between was a night stand with a radio, a lamp, and a stack of comic books--Superman, Donald Duck, and Wonder Woman, my personal favorite, held equal domain her. He pulled open his dresser drawer and pulled out a box.

"Guess what this is," he said.

"Gosh, I don't know, Joey, show me," I said.

"It's a Dick Tracy secret code ring. It has a magnifying glass, a secret compartment and a decoder wheel. We can copy this secret code for you and we can write letters to each other in the code."

"Gee, that would be fun, Joey," I said.

"Could I see the ring?"

"Sure, Angie, but be careful with it. It

cost fifty cents and I had to eat three boxes of cereal for the box tops."

I took the ring and turned it over, looking through the magnifying glass. It was the most intricate ring I had ever seen. In my excitement I dropped it.

"Angie, I told you to be careful!" Joey exploded. "If it broke, you'll have to get me another one!"

Luckily it was intact, but I was stunned. Joey had never talked to me in this angry tone before. I was hurt and bewildered. I handed the ring to him and went downstairs. My feelings were very hurt.

We finished dinner. Grandpa took Joey and I for a walk out to the river that wound near the outskirts of town. The evening was lovely--warmer than usual for the time of year. When we got to the river, Grandpa let us wade at the shallow edge. After awhile Joey said, "Grandpa, I want to go home. I'm cold."

"Cold?" Grandpa said, "how could you be cold on such a warm evening?"

He put his hand on Joey's forehead.

"You feel hot. We'd better go back," he said.

We dried our feet on a towel Grandpa had brought. By the time we got back, Joey said he felt better. We sat on the porch swing awhile, talking and listening to the crickets, then we went to bed. Joey and I slept in his twin beds. Usually we lay and talked after it was time to turn off the lights. Joey talked only a little and fell asleep. He normally was full of plans for the next day. I watched the pattern of leaves on the ceiling shift and sway with the wind. Soon, I slept.

I woke up to Joey calling my name,

"Angie, Angie, wake up. get my mother. I feel sick."

"Whatsa' matter, Joey?" I asked sleepily.

"My throat hurts and I feel like I'm gonna throw up."

With this I jumped up and went into Aunt Rose's bedroom.

"Aunt Rose, wake up! Joey's sick!" I cried.

Aunt Rose barely stirred. When I couldn't wake her, I woke up my mother. She went into Joey's room and turned on the light. She helped Joey into the bathroom.

"Angie, wake up your grandparents. Joey has a fever. We need the thermometer," she said.

I woke my grandparents. Joey was very sick. His temperature was 103 degrees. My mother helped him back to bed and bathed his face and arms with cool water. Grandma got him an aspirin.

"Mom, I think we should wake Rose. Joey is complaining of pain in his neck and back," my mother said.

"Katherine, I doubt if she'll wake up very easily. She takes sleeping pills to help her sleep," Grandma replied.

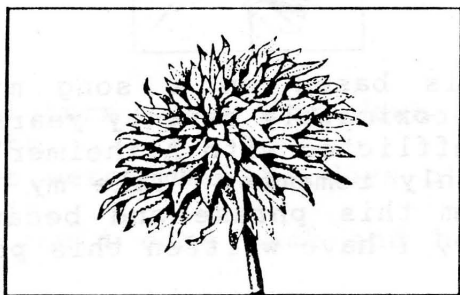
"She's still taking them? Is that why she seems so distant all the time?" was my mother's surprised response.

They both looked at me with that "little-pitchers-have-big-ears" look. Joey seemed very restless. Outside the sky was beginning to lighten. It was the beginning of a very long day. After an hour Joey's temperature was even higher.

"I'm going to call the doctor," Grandma said.

By the time he arrived 45 minutes later,

(continued on p. 39)



ENDEAVORING

So, do you know, did they show?
 Left about some time ago.
Heard they toiled at clevering;
Told they were endeavoring.

Did not catch what they were proving.
Only saw some blurring moving.
Ear drums beat with chatter patter,
Havng heard, "endeavors matter."

Process-spent till Monday mourn,
They shall return, partly worn.
Not intent on outcomes - severing;
Merely poised for delivering endeavoring.

President Daniel A. Felicetti



This poem is based on a song my grandma composed approximately seventy years ago. My grandma is afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and could only remember "Take my hand mama dear." From this phrase and because of my love for her, I have written this poem.

GRANDMA'S LAMENT

I was one of many children, yet I never felt it so.

You had so many chores to do, yet you always let us know,

that Jesus was our Savior; In family we could trust,

and with you Mama dear, we would always be loved.

When thunder stopped our hearts and lightning creased the sky

I knew you'd hold my hand and dry the tears that I cried.

Take my hand Mama dear, I'm frightened and alone.

I need to have your shelter, I need to be back home.

Many moons have come and gone, yet I still feel this way.

Take my hand Mama dear, from you I will not stray.

Take my hand Mama dear, with you I want to stay.

Dreamt last night Mama was dying, just a dream I pray.

Awoke in a cold hard sweat, 'bout fifty years too late.

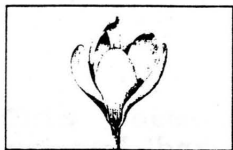
Mama's hand's no longer there to hold me in the night.

I toss and turn, pray for dawn, and hug my
pillow tight.
Wish things were like the days of old on the
Kansas plain.
Wish Mama could come back and help me with
this pain.

Time has played its tricks but I's still
Mama's child.
When twilight's thunder comes, still makes my
heart beat wild.
I's safe in happy memories, when Mama held my
hand.
I return to childhood days of old in our
Kansas land.
Things are always clearer there, once again
I'm sure.
There, I remember everything, I've no need of
a cure.

Mama, where are you? This storm, it has not
passed.
Mama, I'm not as strong as you, I don't think
I'll last.
Mama, you are a guiding light and to your soul
I pray.
Mama, please be with me tonight, and show to
me the way.
Mama, the storm is raging and the night sky is
clear.
Mama, I'm confused. I really wish you were
here.

John Mathis



AN AMISH EXPERIENCE

By Phillip McIntire

When one of my teachers asked me how much I knew about the Amish people, I laughed out loud. Aside from the movie "Witness," the Amish were as foreign as E.T. However, that was before I went to Lancaster, Pennsylvania last summer to visit an Amish community.

After my family spent a few days with my Grandma in York, Pennsylvania, we decided to go to Lancaster. As we traveled out of the gray, smog-infested city of York, the sky slowly turned blue, and the green fields stood out like a pretty picture. We had crossed the Susquehanna River, and the land looked as sacred as the perfect people. It would have been impossible to capture in a single photograph. As we drove closer, we passed house after house surrounded by beautiful white picket fences which, by the way they gleamed, could have been encompassed by angels.

A faint sound of hooves tromping could be heard in the distance. The sound got clearer and clearer until I finally saw a horse and buggy pass by slowly carrying an Amish family, which I watched like a hawk until they eventually rolled out of my view. At that moment, the Amish people were no longer just people in a movie: they were real and I saw them. I was as excited as a kid at Christmas time.

My excitement started to flow into a complete calmness as we approached Lancaster. We passed signs advertising Amish tours, and I wanted to go on one. When I asked my parents about the tour, they said we would go in a couple hours. Two hours seemed like an eternity.

My line of thought was interrupted, as my

dad pulled the car off to the side of the road. Not a word was said while we all stared out the window. At least fifty Amish men worked like little leprechauns putting up the customary barn the community built for a new bride and groom. Tourists could be seen everywhere watching the group. The rhythmic sound of pounding hammers was in itself a symbol of unity that gave me a warm feeling. Just watching them made me want to become one of them and help with this beautiful ritual.


At noon, the clanging of big brass bells could be heard all through the small town. It was lunch time. Men streamed in from the barn site to sit around tables while the women served lunch. The sound of cameras flashing almost disturbed the wonderful sight.

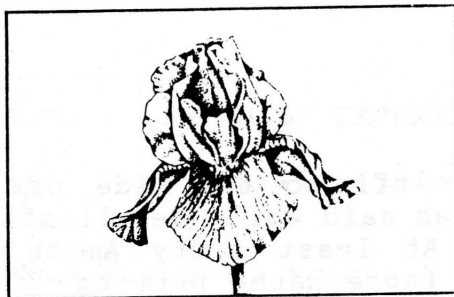
the men went back to work after their hour break, and soon the women came out of the house in a steady stream which sounded like rolling thunder from the heavens. They all sat down and started quilting a quilt for the bride. I looked up at my mother, and tears were streaming down her face. The view of the women working was truly amazing.

The sun was sliding toward the horizon and the barn was built. All the tourists on the side of the road watched a convoy of candle-lit carriages stroll toward home. Not a sound was heard except for the clapping of the horses when they went past.

Then, as the clapping of horses faded out, the night was filled with darkness and we headed toward our car.

My mom slowly turned around "Phillip, I'm sorry we missed the tour," she said. "No, we didn't," I replied.





Falling rain on winter branch
Thoughts flee to distant land
A foreign place, and yet,
more my home than here.

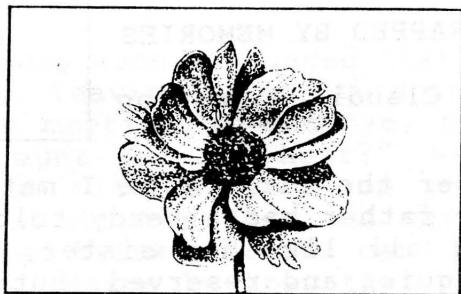
Our yesterday in green patchwork;
How long ago it seems
Through gnarled woods and castle dungeons.
Ancient lives we lived anew.

Battles raged for love and crown;
Romans march to conquer;
Distant ships with masts at full;
Another isle yet untamed.

Time crumbles turret walls;
Forgets the Celtic hero
Historic spirits linger on
Whispering to me alone

In my land I am a stranger,
sick for my foreign home.
Called back across the sea
to the harbor of my soul. ~

Kent Cook



DESTINY

Dedicated to the Senior Class of 1991

The road of life is long.
I don't know where I'm going.
but with me I take this song,
'cause they both keep me growing.

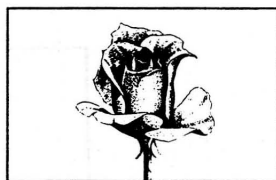
Life is always changing,
like a sturdy autumn breeze.
It shakes the leaves of security,
and keeps them from my reach.

But I've walked this road before.
I've been in and out her doors.
And it seems to me,
that I've found my key.
Destiny's twists will set me free.

John Mathis

TRAPPED BY MEMORIES

By Claudia Struewing



I remember the first time I met my Aunt Cordelia. My father had already told me that she wasn't at all like her sister, my mama. She was more quiet and reserved, but I wasn't expecting this. The front door opened, and we were greeted, to my surprise, by a very homely-looking lady who stood halfway behind the door as though trying to hide. She politely gestured for my father and me to come in and have a seat.

As soon as we were seated with my father sitting beside Aunt Cordelia and me seated across the room in a corner chair of deep purple velvet, they began chatting. My father, realizing that his sister-in-law didn't have much to say, took over the conversation by telling her of his plans and thanking her for keeping me while he was away.

As she inattentively listened, I glanced around the huge living room, at the heavy closed drapes, the beautifully carved furniture of pine, I think, and the knickknacks spread throughout the room. When she wasn't looking, I even ventured a glance her way or actually a stare. She was a pleasant enough looking woman, I suppose, but much too quiet for my taste. She couldn't have been all that much older than my father, I suspected, although I must admit that something about her made her seem older than her years. Maybe it was the way she did her hair up on her head or the positively dreadful dress she wore. I wanted to tell her that no one dresses like that anymore, but I kept silent hoping that my stay with Aunt Cordelia would prove better than I imagined at that moment.

As was to be expected, to my great

horror, Daddy soon announced that he had to be on his way, leaving me and this stranger alone after just meeting. "Goodbye, pumpkin. You mind your aunt now, you hear?" were his final words, and with a peck on my cheek, he disappeared out the door. I waved after him as he walked briskly to his car, but he didn't turn back. Maybe he knew that if he did, he might see the pain in my eyes at having lost my mother and father in only a few short months.

But I couldn't let Aunt Cordelia see how I felt. After all, none of this was her fault, so I just had to act like a big girl as Daddy always said and try to make the best of it. I turned around then to see Aunt Cordelia leaving the room, and I followed her, curious to find out more about her. My eyes bulged in awe as I walked through room after room of high ceilings and more furniture on fancy legs with large rugs covering every hardwood floor until we reached the kitchen. It was huge, too, for a kitchen that is. I just couldn't hold my tongue any longer. She hadn't said a word to me since my daddy left, and the silence in that big old house was almost spooky. "How can anyone live in this big old house all by himself? Why, this kitchen itself is big enough for a person to dance in if he has a mind to," I murmured. I was sure that caught her attention for she turned in my direction and proceeded to explain how she grew up in that house and how it was all that was left of her family. "Now, just stop your gabbing, young lady, and sit down before supper gets cold," she snapped as she pointed to the table she had just set.

I watched as she dished up the chicken and peas, noticing how proper she was with every movement. Then she sat down across from

me, spread a fancy lace napkin over her lap, and began to eat her meal in silence which made me feel uneasy again. I stared down at my plate, not feeling very hungry but tried to eat something anyway. "Umm. This is very good. What's it called?" I asked as I scraped up the last few bites with my fingers.

For just a fleeting second, I could see a smile pass over her face as she whispered in a gentle tone, "It's cinnamon chicken. Your grandmama taught your mama and me how to cook when we were your age. She always said that one thing a young lady needed to know in order to get a husband was how to cook. Always was his favorite."

"Whose favorite?" I asked.

"No one's," she shot back quickly as her tone changed. "Now hurry up and finish, so we can get all this cleaned up and get you settled."

After we'd finished the dishes in relative silence except for my occasional questions and put them all away safely in the cupboard, my aunt showed me to a room which was to be mine. I carried my suitcase, which Daddy had brought in earlier, up the stairs and lugged it up on the high bed covered with what looked to be a handmade quilt. "Now," she suddenly spoke after she had begun unpacking for me, "since this will be your room, I expect you to take care to see that it always looks neat and tidy. School will be starting next Monday as I'm sure your father has already told you." She glanced at me, and I nodded. "Well, then I will expect no trouble from you. As long as you behave and do as well as you can, we'll get along just fine." She ended then and turned around to go, leaving me to look at what was now my room. Again there was some more of that old

furniture like I had seen in the rest of the house. Not a speck of dust was to be found anywhere as I ran my finger over the top of the dresser and rocking chair in the corner.

When I had finished my inspection, I wandered back down to the living room to see what Aunt Cordelia was doing now. As I neared the room, I could hear the sounds of a waltz coming from the old phonograph in the corner. I hid in the doorway to see what was happening, for I didn't want to disturb her. To my amazement she was dancing, and not only that, but she seemed as though she was waltzing with someone else. She moved lightly and gracefully, acting as though she were a young lady giggling and flirting with her male partner. I thought this odd but watched only a few more minutes before returning to my room and crawling into the big, warm bed for lack of anything else to do.

Monday morning I got up early to explore the house before school which I had not been able to do as of yet. I was still a bit nervous at having to go to a new school with new faces, but I wanted to make my daddy happy and show him that I was a big girl. I thought about this as I strolled through the upstairs hallway, finding more rooms very similar to mine with handmade quilts placed neatly on each bed. I roamed up and down the long hall with a rug equally as long running down the center. As I turned to go back downstairs, I came to another door, which upon opening I discovered led to an attic. But I didn't have time to explore that just now. I ventured back downstairs quietly to take a peek at the rest of the house. All the rooms here appeared to be lost in time with the furniture not having been moved for years or the heavy drapes not having been opened to

allow in the sun. Even the knickknacks of bronze or delicate porcelain on the tables seemed to be placed around the rooms strategically and never were disturbed since first being placed there, not even to dust. Also, to my great bewilderment, there were no portraits of any of the family hanging on the walls or sitting out. Only beautiful oil paintings of different sizes hung on the walls. I wondered how anyone could live like this. It was as though Aunt Cordelia had cut herself off from the outside world and was cooped up in her own little world right here. However, I would have to continue my journey through the house and Aunt Cordelia's private world later, or I might be late for the first day at school.

I heard racket coming from the kitchen as I rounded a corner. When my aunt spotted me entering the large room, she announced that breakfast was ready and finished pouring a glass of milk for me. "You mustn't start the first day of school without a good breakfast. That's what Mama always said." And she again drifted back into her world of memories as I was beginning to realize she usually did on the few occasions that she spoke.

The next thing I knew she had snapped out of her daydreaming and was scooting me out the door, calling after me, "Behave yourself, and don't start the first day off on the wrong foot."

Well, I did behave myself that day as instructed, and I made a lot of new friends along the way which is what I had been trying to do with Aunt Cordelia, only with limited success. Over the next few weeks I had asked her to teach me to cook as an attempt to become more acquainted. She told her stories of when her mother first taught her how to sew

and cook and knit, but it always seemed that just as she was about to say something important, she would break off and become silent. I gathered that she didn't like talking about her adolescence. Maybe something had happened to make her want to forget those years, and so she kept herself closed off from others. She never left the house except for the necessary shopping or church on Sunday. In the evenings, she would sit in her rocking chair in front of the lifeless fireplace and read thick books of poetry which, judging from their titles, seemed to be very depressing.

One particular evening I decided that I would sit with her in the dimly lit room and read. However, I had no books other than school books, a problem which was easily remedied as I opened the wide doors to the library. I was shocked at the thought of anyone having her own private library right in her home, but there it was. Bookshelves full of gold-trimmed books covered each wall. I climbed up on a high-backed chair to read some of the named--Milton, Coleridge, Shelley, Dickens. I wasn't familiar with too many of these, but I pulled out the collection of stories by Dickens since I had at least heard of him. As I began flipping through its pages, the book fell open on its own to a certain page. A letter addressed to a Miss Cordelia Butterfinger stood between the open pages like a bookmark. Out of curiosity I read the letter, a love letter from an old beau. The way it sounded they must have been very much in love, but that must have been a very long time ago. I read the postmark on the envelope which said June 23, 1942. Why, she must have been only a young woman then. But I wasn't going to question her about it

now. I'd just wait and see if she ever brought it up on her own. Right now I had to get back out to the living room before she came looking for me and found me snooping around.

One afternoon while Aunt Cordelia was in the kitchen preparing our supper, I quickly ran up to the attic to find a photograph of my family for sharing time at school the next day. I didn't want to bother my aunt with it since she was busy, and besides, she didn't like me going through old things that belonged to her family. She said that they were private. but I decided that that was the only place I might find a picture. As quietly as I could, I climbed the attic stairs, but they creaked beneath my feet. I prayed that she wouldn't hear me making so much noise. Searching for the light right inside the door, I stumbled over something as I waded through the dust and cobwebs. It fell to the floor with a loud crash which was sure to bring Aunt Cordelia running. A few seconds later I found the light and switched it on, then tip toed to an old trunk which was sure to have old photo albums. As I opened the rusty-hinged trunk and began shuffling through the pictures, I could hear Aunt Cordelia's voice, "Cynthia? Cynthia? Are you up there, honey?"

But I didn't answer. I just sat there motionless as she climbed the stairs to the attic, grumbling all the while about being an old woman and not needing this kind of excitement. Suddenly there she stood in the doorway looking bigger than ever with the light from the stairs illuminating her from behind. She gasped as she found her way through the clutter, and I held my breath. "What on earth are you doing up here, child?"

she lashed out when she saw me.

"I was only looking for a photograph of our family to take to school. I didn't mean to upset you, Aunt Cordelia. Honest."

She must have seen the startled look on my face for her tone softened, "Well, you should have asked, that's all. You ought to know better than to be snooping around in someone else's things. Scared the living daylights out of me. But no harm done, I suppose," she said as her anger subsided.

"May I still have a picture to take to school, Aunt Cordelia? All the other kids will have one," I asked holding out the box of old photographs to her.

Aunt Cordelia took the musty smelling box from me and, brushing off a dust covered chair, sat down and began shuffling through the box. Picture after picture brought back a flood of memories to her of when her family was all together and everyone was happy. She smiled to herself and with tears in her eyes, she whispered, "Oh, my! Will you look at that? Weren't we a bunch? I remember when this picture was taken," she sighed as she handed me the photograph. I sat quietly listening as she went into her dream world again. "That was the summer of nineteen thirty-eight. The church picnic, I believe. That's your grandmama and grandpapa right there on the swing," she pointed out to me.

"Oh Aunt Cordelia, is that you?" my eyes lit up as I spotted a young woman with the deepest auburn hair sitting under a maple tree.

She took the photograph back and answered reflectively, "Ah, yes, that was me, and there's your mama sneaking off behind the church with her young man. Your father, of course," she clarified. "They were such a

handsome couple."

"You were so beautiful then," I said in amazement as I looked back and forth from my aunt to the woman in the picture.

"Well, now that's enough of that," she snapped. "You can stop your gawking this minute." Then after a moment of silence, she smiled again. I could see the sudden change in her mood as tears welled up in her eyes when she spoke, "That was the last happy time we all had together before the war."

Sensing her grief, I pulled out another picture and tried to change the subject by asking, "Was he an old boyfriend of yours?" With my finger, I pointed out a tall, dark haired gentleman standing beside Aunt Cordelia.

"That was a long time ago," she answered, but offered no more. "Here is your picture to take to school," she choked out as she sniffled and wiped at her tears.

"What was his name?"

"Roger Dalton."

"Did you love him?"

"I suppose I did."

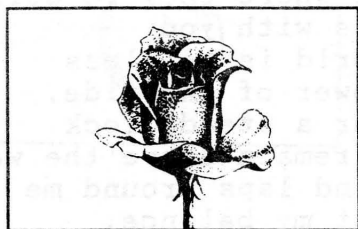
"Why'd he go away?"

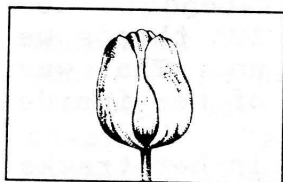
"He was called off for duty in the war if you must know. Now, honestly, young lady, you ask entirely too many questions. That's enough remembering for one day. It's time for supper, and my pot roast is probably ruined by now. Come on, missy, put away that dirty box, and get yourself cleaned up," she commanded, back to her usual self again.

I ran to catch up with her, babbling all the way, "Did he ever come back?" I took the silence as an answer and continued, "Were you really sad when he left? I'll bet it was terribly tragic when he went away. Just like when my mommy died. But we'll be all right,

Aunt Cordelia, won't we? We'll probably miss them and all, but as my daddy says, 'We just have to remember the good times and go on with our lives,' and that's what I intend to do. Just go on and remember all the fun things we did together when Mama was with us. That way there'll always be a little bit of her inside me."

At that moment, she stopped in her tracks and turned around to look at me. She had the strangest look on her face, like she had actually heard what I had said. Maybe she had. I'm really not sure what happened, for out of the blue, she pulled me to her and held me tightly. I could hear her quiet sobs just before she let me go, and with her arm still around my shoulders, she led me to the kitchen to enjoy our supper.



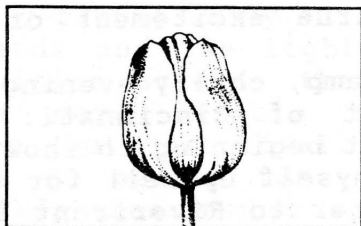


IN MY HEART

You have walked on waters of my heart
Danced on rivers of my soul
Swam like minnows through my mind,
Until I overflowed.
In as ocean with the salty tide
Which stings my vulnerability
I push on by day, towards
Images of you.
And out just before the sun's first kiss.
Yet, like a child, I splash
With joy at new discoveries:
To touch the starfish which fell
From the ocean's blue sky,
To join the otters floating
Lazily without a care,
Not quite sure where they're going
So long as it's with you.
And all the world is helpless
Against the power of the tide.
And I reach for a steady rock
With which to remain above the waves.
But it foams and laps around me
Until I've lost my balance.
Until order, reality,
Dreams and logic
Swirl in eddies throughout my mind.
The otter and I are pulled,
Our hearts' thirst for to quench,
Farther still from the shore.
But then the sun's first rays

Gently touch the surface
Until it glistens
In the new day's image.
A kiss,
So warm, so pure,
With honesty nature can't deny.
It is a world unto itself,
A world of inner beauty
Unlike all others,
Where all the world is helpless
Against the power of the tide.

Noelle Gasco





THE EFFECTS OF A CROWD

By April Duff

People are always watching sporting events on television, whether it be Monday Night Football or golf. These fans sit in their family rooms and watch while their favorite teams go head-to-head. Although these home viewers may get hyped-up over the excitement of the game, it is nothing like being there in person. Home viewers see the action and hear the commentating, but there is no comparison to the overwhelming excitement of a live game. The fans, the spirit, and even the smell of the popcorn turn an average game into a sensational event. I had never been to a large-scale sporting event in my life until I went to the final National League championship Series game in Cincinnati several weeks ago. It was not until then that I realized the true excitement of a baseball game.


It was a damp, chilly evening as we drove into the heart of Cincinnati. The fall weather was just beginning to show itself, and I had bundled myself up well for the evening. As we grew nearer to Riverfront Stadium, the streets were lined with scalpers and game-goers who yelled and cheered as the cars drove by. This atmosphere only built the excitement that was now growing inside of me. After parking the car, we walked several blocks to the stadium, and every step we took brought us closer to the anxious, screaming crowd that filled the still night air like sirens. Upon reaching the stadium, we were surrounded by even more scalpers and people selling all types of souvenirs--hats, shirts, and bumper stickers. There were people all around me.

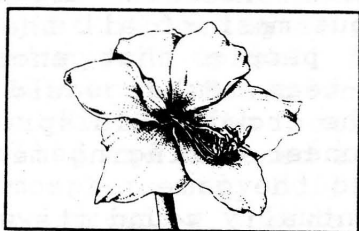
The excitement that had been mounting inside of me since the first Cincinnati radio station was still fuzzy in the car all but overwhelmed me when I first stepped foot into the stadium.

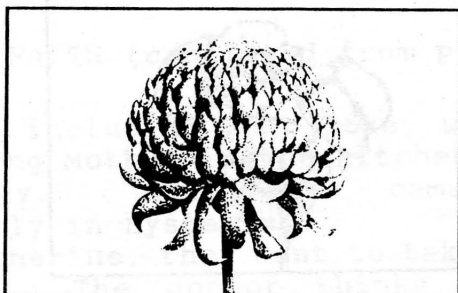
I had often seen the screaming fans at a football or baseball game when I watched a game on television, and when I first walked into the stadium I imagined things to be somewhat that way. Much to my surprise, the excitement was exceedingly larger in person; it seemed to smack me in the face as I walked in. As I stepped out of the walkway and over toward the seats, I was knocked over by the number of people I saw. I was standing among fifty thousand people who were waiting with bated breath for the final NLCS game to start. As the Reds came out onto the field, the fans bolted to their feet and began to cheer. There seemed to be an explosion in the air as the fans made their enthusiasm verbal. This frenzy rang in my ears throughout the entire game. I found myself throughout large parts of the game simply taking in my surroundings--the huge scoreboards and the lighted signs, the mammoth television screens that brought the action to a more visible distance, the Goodyear Blimp, but most of all the thousands and thousands of people that encircled me. Each time a Reds team member would get a hit or score a run, the crowd would spring up from their seats and cheer, bringing me out of my daze and back into the game.

The game eventually wound its way down to one final play. It was the top of the ninth, and Cincinnati was ahead by one point, and the Pirates had two outs. As the final Pirate stepped up to the mound, the entire stadium came to life. The crowd was so loud that my ears vibrated with sound. I could feel it in my chest, people screaming, clapping, and

pounding the metal rafters above my head with their fists. The anxiety was visible in the batter's face as the pitches began to fly, and the sweat poured off his face like rain. after two balls and two strikes, a final stride was made, and the game was over. The already excited crowd now blew up with cheers. As the Reds fans jumped on their seats and hugged ne another, neon signs flashed "Reds Won! Reds Won!", firecrackers went off, and the team members ran onto the field. It was as if everyone's excitement had exploded.

I had never been a very avid fan of any sport before I went to this game, and the only games I had truly gotten into were high school games. That night in Cincinnati with all of the fans and the stadium that seemed to rock due to all of the spirit was all it took to get me hyped-up for baseball. I will never again think watching a baseball game on television is anything like being there in person. There is just no comparison. 

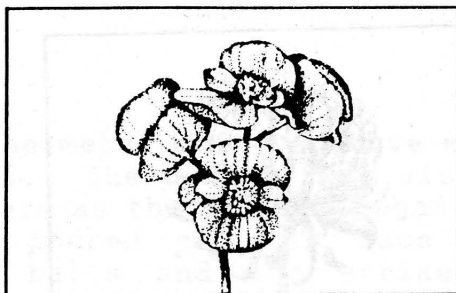




DESTINY TO DIE

Death is the sentence
Murder is the crime
Earth is the victim
Of man's tormented mind.
War is our history
The demon we must bear.
Power is the wine for which we crave
To quench the thirst of our lust filled ways.
Pride is an honor we must defend
To glorify our existence to all other men.
Through battles of justice
And the bloodshed of peace
We are killing our children
Our homes and our streets.
Destruction is the wasteland of our past.
As planetary genocide is our future task.
Paradise abandoned -- For the taste of
forbidden fruit.
War is our destiny
The final performance
For all to behold
A destiny to die.

David J.B. Hicks



No More Fighting
Trivial tiffs,
Serious strides,
and waging war--
and different ways and extents
of fighting.
Fighting for freedom,
fighting for love,
Fighting for success--
why do we create such a mess
by fighting for everything
that we want and need?
I, for one, am tired of fighting,
of living in fear.
Peace lies yet so near--
don't run away from it
but come closer,
even if just a little bit.
If everyone works as one,
maybe the sun
will dry up the tears and the anger
created by the wounds of war
to make all people everywhere
realize--
that we need no more fighting anymore.

Karen Hauser

everyone, including Aunt Rose, was awake. I was helping Mother in the kitchen with Paulie and Mikey. Aunt Rose came downstairs practically in hysterics.

"Katherine, they want to take Joey to the hospital. The doctor thinks it could be polio!"

She was shaking violently.

"I can't lose him--I can't! He's all I have left! If something happens to him I'll kill myself. I've been almost dead since Frank died anyhow."

She sat down in a chair and wept. I was terrified. I looked from Mother to Aunt Rose. I started to run upstairs.

"Angie," Mother said, "come back here. I need you here, and you'll be in the way up there."

Mother's face had a stricken look. It was only when I got older that I knew the word "polio" was one of the most feared words a parent could hear. The ambulance came and took Joey and Grandma to the hospital. Grandpa and Aunt Rose followed in the car. Mother, the baby, Paulie and I sat around the house, waiting for the phone to ring. As if adding to the gloom, the sky darkened as the afternoon wore on, threatening a storm.

Finally about 3:30 a car pulled up. It was Grandpa. I ran out on the porch.

"Grandpa, is Joey okay? Can I see him? Where's Grandma? When can he come home?"

Grandpa's face looked grim and very tired.

"Angie, one question at a time. Joey is very, very sick. Your grandma and Aunt Rose are still with him. We don't know when he'll come home. What we need to do now is pray very hard that Joey will get well soon. They

won't let you see him because you're too little. Let's go in and see your mother."

When we got inside, Mother asked me to take Paulie for a little walk to the corner and back so she and my grandfather could talk. Years later I found out how terrified my mother was that I or Paulie or even the baby might contract polio also. However, I did not know of her grave concern. It did seem strange at the time that whenever we sneezed or coughed she seemed unduly alarmed.

My mother had been in a quandary about whether to stay to be of support to my grandparents and Aunt Rose or to leave because of the contagion. My grandfather settled it.

"Katherine, you should take the children and go home tomorrow. There's nothing you can do here anyhow and we'll talk on the phone every day."

When I heard we were leaving, I was greatly distressed, "...but, Mother, Joey will want to see me when he's better. I know he will. He'll be well soon. I need to be here."

"Angie, you can't go to the hospital. You're not old enough. When Joey is... better, we'll come back and see him. Besides, remember your promise to Sister Cecelia to sing at Mass every morning?"

"Oh, who cares about that. I want to stay!" I wailed and stamped my foot.

Had Mother not understood how upset I was, I'm sure she would have looked quite unfavorably on my behavior. We left the next morning after Church. It was a very quiet, sad trip home. Joey was no better.

My father decided he would take the following Monday and Tuesday off to go to Chesterton to be of any help he could. It seemed my mother was on the phone constantly talking to him or my grandparents. I

continued my daily singing at Mass and praying very hard for Joey, but he was still very ill.

One day, about six weeks after Joey got sick, Sister Cecelia asked me to stay after Mass and help her and Mrs. O'Neil. They took care of the sacristy. While I was doing a little dusting and emptying vases, I overheard them talking. Mrs. O'Neil had just come back from Lourdes, a city in France where the Blessed Mother had appeared to a girl named Bernadette, who was not much older than I.

"Sister Cecelia, I can't tell you how moved I was to see that little cave with all the crutches hanging on the walls," Mrs. O'Neil said. "So many people have gone there ill or crippled and come away completely cured. Many don't, of course, but it is truly an inspiration to see the strong faith of all those people."

"I've read so much about it," Sister Cecelia replied, "some day I hope to visit there myself. Do you think the visit helped your husband's heart trouble?"

"No," said Mrs. O'Neil, "not in a physical way, but I'm sure the Blessed Mother heard our prayers. God just has His own way of answering them. Tom says just being there made him feel better. We brought some of the holy water from the grotto back with us. It has worked miracles."

I had stopped working to listen to this conversation. The words, "it has worked miracles" kept running through my head. In my heart I knew this was what Joey needed--a miracle. I had overheard my mother and father talking and they said he might not survive this terrible illness.

Sister Cecelia told me I could leave. I left the Church, but waited outside. When

Mrs. O'Neil came out I approached her.

"Mrs. O'Neil," I said, "could I talk to you for a minute?"

"Or course, Angie," she said, "what is it you want?"

"You know I have a cousin, Joey, who has polio and he's awful sick and he might--he might--," with that, I burst into tears.

Mrs. O'Neil had raised five children and she knew very well how to comfort a child in distress. She hugged me and patted my back. We sat on the Church steps until my tears subsided.

"Now, Angie," she said kindly, "what did you want to talk about?"

"You said you had some water from that Lourdes place that helped make sick people better. Could I have just a little bit for my cousin? Just a tiny, tiny bit cause he's really not big like your husband?"

"Of course you can have some, Angie. The only thing you must keep in mind is this. When we ask God for something we must be ready for His answer. Sometimes His answer isn't what we want. It's sort of like if you ask your mother for a cookie. What you want is for her to say yes, but she might say no because you've already had too many, or it's near a meal or she might know something that you don't. For instance she might have a special dessert planned and she knows you don't need the extra sugar from the cookie. In a lot bigger way, that's the way God is.

"You come across the street to my house and I'll give you some of the holy water, then I'll walk you home. I haven't visited with your mother for ages."

Carefully, I carried my small bottle of holy water home. Mrs. O'Neil and my mother talked for a long time. I tried to keep busy

with my dolls. Then Paulie wanted me to play trucks with him in the sandbox. Finally Mrs. O'Neil left and Mother came out to sit with us.

"Mrs. O'Neil told me she gave you some holy water from Lourdes. You'll want to take it to Joey, I know. I'm going to call Grandma pretty soon and see what she says. I'd like to go myself and see how things are."

Soon Mother called us in for lunch.

"Grandma says the doctor feels the contagious part of the polio is past," Mother said.

"What's 'contagious'?" I asked.

"It means the time you might get polio also. We were all very worried about that, but the time has passed now. It would be safe for you and Paulie and the baby. Maybe we can go this weekend, but don't get your hopes up, Angie, about seeing Joey. Hospitals have strict rules about children visiting, and Joey is still so sick."

"But, Mother, the Lourdes water will make him better. I know it will!" I said fervently.

"Maybe you're right, Angie, maybe you're right," Mother sighed.

We arrived in Chesterton late on Saturday morning. Grandma was so happy to see all of us. Normally we visited more often.

"Is Rose at the hospital?" Mother asked.

"No, she isn't up yet," Grandma said, "and I feel badly because she hardly goes at all anymore."

"Mom, sometimes I just don't understand her," my mother said impatiently.

"Well, she has been under quite a strain. You know all of this with Joey brings back the pain of Frank's death to her. I know she should be stronger, but she's just not,"

Grandma said tiredly.

"Grandma, do you think I could go see Joey?" I know he'd like to see me, and I sure would like to see him. I have something important for him."

"You know, Angie, I talked to the doctor when I knew you were coming. He and I both think that Joey's seeing you for a few minutes might perk him up a little. He's going to see if he can arrange something."

Late in the afternoon the doctor called. They were going to wheel Joey's bed to the edge of the sun room door and I could see him there for just a few minutes.

Clutching the little bottle tightly in my hand, I walked the three blocks to the hospital with Mother. We rode the elevator to the fourth floor, the children's floor. We waited in the sun room. It was well named for the afternoon sun streamed in. It was very warm. The ceiling fan was on high speed and a small oscillating fan gently went back and forth, stirring the humid air. Suddenly, I was very nervous.

--Please, Holy Mother, I thought. Ask God to help Joey get well. I love him like I love Paulie. Please...

Mother touched my shoulder.

"Here he is."

I was totally unprepared for what I saw. Joey was so thin and pale. I walked up to the bed to make sure it was my cousin. For a moment, I thought it wasn't. I couldn't speak. Then he spoke, or whispered, "Hi, Angie."

I could barely hear him, but those two words broke my silence.

"Hi, Joey! I'm so glad to see you. I'm sorry you got sick. I've missed you so much. I've got something that will make you better. It's some holy water from Lourdes. The

Blessed Mother appeared there to Bernadette who was a kid like us. Lots of people who go there get well. I just know you will."

I couldn't seem to stop talking. Mother finally quieted me down. Joey had a very faint glimmer of a smile on his small pale face.

"Joey," I said, "could you touch your finger to this bottle of water and make the Sign of the Cross?"

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, he shook his head.

"Okay, I'll do it for you," I said.

I touched my fingers to the bottle and tipped it until they were wet. I made the Sign of the Cross touching Joey's forehead, heart, and both shoulders. Silently I repeated my prayer.

Just then the nurse came and said Joey had to go back to his room.

"Not so soon," I cried, "he just came!"

"He needs lots of rest so he can get well. Maybe in a few weeks you can see him again."

Again I saw a faint smile briefly light Joey's face as the nurse wheeled him away.

"We'd better go now," Mother said as Joey and the nurse rounded a corner and out of sight.

On the way home I said, "Joey sure does look sick, but I bet in a few days he'll be all better."

"I hope you're right, Angie. That's what we're praying for," Mother said.

When we got to Grandma's, Aunt Rose was sitting on the couch, staring off into space.

"Aunt Rose," I said, "Joey's going to get well now. I made the Sign of the Cross on him with holy water from Lourdes. He'll be okay

soon."

"What a silly child you are," Aunt Rose said. "You think your holy water will make him better? I'm going to lose Joey the way I lost my Frank in the war; then I'll have nothing left."

"But, Aunt Rose, he's going to be okay. I told you that. The Blessed Mother will help him. She loves little children. I don't know why you don't go see Joey. He really needs you, and he will get well."

Aunt Rose looked at me with a wild look on her face and ran upstairs. Grandpa had gone to the hospital to spend the evening with Joey. Grandma, my mother, Paulie and I ate supper after Mother fed the baby. It was so good to be with Grandma again, but it was lonesome without Joey.

After supper, I went out on the porch to sit on the swing. The evening was so soft and beautiful. A cool breeze had sprung up and the leaves were rustling overhead. I leaned my head back on the pillow and fell asleep.

I awoke to hear someone coming up on the porch. It was Grandpa.

"How's Joey?" I asked

He sat down beside me. His look told me things weren't very good.

"Angie, Joey seems worse tonight. Would you please go in the house and ask your Grandma to come out here? -- and, Angie, please stay inside."

Grandma went out and I heard them talking. The word "crisis" was mentioned several times and "Rose" many times. Grandpa went up to Aunt Rose's room and they all left for the hospital after speaking briefly to my mother.

A few minutes after they left, my mother said, "Angie, we need to pray very hard right


now for Joey."

Mother and I sat in the living room, she with her arms around me and we prayed for Joey. Like the summer, it was a long, long evening. My bed time came and went, but Mother let me stay up, knowing I'd want to know about Joey. Finally we heard footsteps on the porch. There stood Aunt Rose at the door. She burst into tears when she walked in.

--Oh, I thought, Joey can't be worse--he just can't.

"Angie," Aunt Rose said as she gained control, "I ran ahead because I wanted to be the one to tell you. How, I don't know, but Joey's better. For a few minutes, we thought he was gone. It was as if someone said, 'No, not this little boy. He is needed here.' I still can't believe it. The doctor really thinks that now he will make it. We won't know for awhile about his legs, but we still have him and I'm going to hang onto that."

Mother and I hugged Aunt Rose. Just then Grandma and Grandpa came in. Grandpa got his accordion and began playing songs he knew from his childhood in Italy. Paulie and the baby woke up and we had a very joyful, and noisy, celebration. Our Joey was going to be well again.

Many years have passed since that long ago summer. Joey and I have our own families now. We don't see each other often since he lives two thousand miles away. His illness left him with only a slight limp; it left Aunt Rose with her faith restored. Joey and I talk of all our other times together with much happiness, but we speak of that miraculous summer of 1948 with awe and thanksgiving. 

Be a part of the golden anniversary year of the Fioretti. Submit poetry, short fiction, drama, and pen and ink drawings for our second edition by the end of January 1992.

