

The Gift

They rush outside and kneel on the St. Augustine grass, soft and warm in sunlight, hurried fingers examining, marveling, the Christmas gift they never thought to receive.

He holds it high for them both to admire then places it just so against his shoulder. She observes with dutiful pride. Her brother knows everything.

Together, they run their fingers over the stock, then the trigger, shivering a little with incredulity at the moment, locked in ardent intensity, discovering every detail, recounting rules and tales of eyes lost to carelessness.

Reverently, gently, the first BB rolls metallically down, down it's hidden journey, another and another, rolling over and over into place.

He pumps the barrel, stands straight and fearless like her heroes of Saturday morning, and sights an outcropping of limestone, his first target.

A delicious zping, a ricochet, a puff of dust!

Such immense Ecstasy!

An astonishing rush of power so strong, so unfamiliar and compelling they feel dizzy.

Zping zping zping he aims and shoots, a surprising marksman, an extraordinary brother.

Quick! The next target! Over there! A flowerpot, dog bowl, mother's bird bath, the world is a target!

A bird flies. He takes aim as it lands. Zping!

It falls on the soft St. Augustine grass, warm in the sunlight.

Silently, they kneel, cupping the dying bird, the gift forgotten.