Nostalgic Remembrances

Painted by MidJourney





Austin P. Torney

NOSTALGIC REMEMBRANCES

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Lives, Loves, and Words

I recently read Richard Le Gallienne's 'Young Lives', clued to me by Jacy, which book described his younger life, loves, and his written words of poetry and prose, enroute to his job as a columnist, novelist, and poet, his 'young romances' beginning around the age of twenty, these endeavors of love having been necessarily earlier restricted during the prudent Victorian era.

What a difference a hundred and fifty years makes—no more chaperones. Go back thousands of years, though, when the life span was only about forty, if that, and we'll find marriage at thirteen. So it is that nature still gets our bodies ready for procreation, even by twelve, now, and I heard that it may have even moved up a year.

Gallienne became relatively famous. I'm not, but Jacy had pointed out some similarities, such as lineage, history, general outlook, metaphysics, romanticism, elfin lore, writing a Rubaiyat, sailing ancestors, and poetry/prose, not to mention the love of the female form.

My reading of Galliene's exploits spurred me to write my own autobiography, realizing that there were enough twists and turns of Fate in my life to carry it forth, and from even younger times, plus there were ever the universal themes that a general audience could appreciate. Plus, I had a reservoir of untapped material. I'm 75, at the time of this writing, and I've perhaps exhausted the other genres, having done near one of each.

Who really cares, though, about my life in particular? Probably not many, but I still had one of the easiest writing jobs, the retelling of actual happenings, and so a lot of words flowed out, rather effortlessly, they practically writing themselves.

I had to take advantage of myself while I was still in the mood. There are also the heights of emotion that sweep one over and through and through while writing.







TIME PAST

The past is never past, at least while we're alive.
Memories, while re-cognized and ephemeral,
Still have a very basic core of persistence.

A memory returns from a taste of butterscotch,
From which Grandma's olden home arises,
And then related connections further arrive.



**Reminiscence stirs connections within the mind,
Each little germ of recollection ballooning
Into a wondrous and glorious revelation.**





How does this past remain, and what kind of substance
Could there be that lives so completely outside time?
What makes it so strong that it can ever survive
The merciless climate of the well trafficked brain?





In what storm’s eye does it reside, in the center
Of a maelstrom of the change and growth of cells?
What are these indestructible grains that persist
Among the shifting sands of time, bare, and alone?





How do such apparitions reappear, sink and swell,
Float and change, weathering the acids of time's reflux?
We know why—prions, but this essence pales, compared
To the sensation of life's enjoyments redux.

Jonah Lehrer has the full answer, summarized:

The memory making process needs proteins
For the cellular construction of remembrance,
Yet the life of a protein is but 14 days.

And some hippocampal neurons die,
And some are born anew,
Yet some memory seems immutable.
Does the mind constantly reincarnate?

Aye, our memories must be made
Of a material stronger than cells,
And must be quite specific as well.

While each neuron has but a single nucleus,
It has a teeming mass of dendritic branches,
Connecting to other neurons at dendritic synapses,
Such as the branches of two trees touching in a forest.

So, it is at these tiny crossings that memories are made;
Not in the trunk of the neuronal tree,
but in its sprawling canopy.

What marks a specific branch as a memory?
What molecule awaits the taste of butterscotch?

It has to turn on mRNA to help make the proteins.
It's name is
Cyptoplasmic polyadenenylaton element binding protein,
A tough assignment of a name for even my memory to recall,
So, how about CPEB, for short.

Since it was in the brain's memory center,
Scientists looked for it in sea slugs,
Amazingly finding it in the slug's neurons.
Upon removing it, the sea slugs
Could not remember a darn thing!

But how does it work, existing outside of time?

Well, it has a series of repetitions
In its amino acid repetitions:

QQQLQQQQQQBQLQQQQ,

Where Q is glutamine.

Looking for similar odd repetitions,
What looked like a prion was found!

Prions are pathogens of Earth's nastiest diseases.

They are everywhere, and have two distinct states,
As no other proteins do, one active and one inactive.

Without guidance from above, they can switch states
And alter proteomic structure without changing DNA,
And then transmit their new, infectious structure
To neighboring cells with no transfer of genetic material.

Biology's sacred rules are violated!

In the brain, CREB proteins
Are sturdy enough to resist time,
They being virtually indestructible.

Yet, they have plasticity,
Being free of the genetic substrate,
To change their shapes, creating or erasing a memory.

When we think, the neurotransmitters
Serotonin and dopamine are released by neurons,
Which switch the CPEB protein into its active state
By changing the very structure.

The activated CPEB marks
A specific dendritic branch as a memory,
Recruiting the requisite mRNA
Needed to maintain long-term remembrance.

And, yet, prions have an element of randomness
Built into their structure due to the inscrutable
Laws of protein folding and stoichiometry,
Even becoming active for no reason.

Ah, such contingency is just like Proust predicted:
The remembrance of things past
May not be the remembrance
Of things as they were.

Due to unpredictable and unstable prions,
We may have some essential randomness,
For memory obeys nothing outside of itself.

Also noted:

Our rememberings try to describe
Reality as it really was experienced,
But, that sheer essence may elude,
Although some general outline remains.

Then, too, we add to it, subtract from it
And reconnect by association to the new.
Lo, the subjective metes out our reality;
While the objective lies furthest removed.

How do some crumbs, here, and of the past
Waft back as vapours unto our present?

Do the senses of smell and taste,
Yet more fragile and more insubstantial,
Bear a unique burden of memory,
As more enduring and faithful,
Rising up past the ruins of the rest?

Just noting the butterscotch,
Back then, without its tasting,
Would not have made the mark.



Time mutates some ancient pastimes,
And so they are not wholly recaptured,
And sometimes rather fallible,
Even altered more by the call to mind,
Yet they are there.

A memory begins as a changing
Connection between two neurons.
The strength of the synapse changes
So that the neurons can communicate.

Thus, the taste of memory also activates
The neurons downstream
To do with one's childhood days.

The neurons have been
Inextricably entwined,
Yet, too, reconsolidate upon recall.



Nostalgic Notions

Painted by MidJourney

Austin P. Torney









Nostalgic Notions

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Web site:
:https://theomarkhayyamclubofamerica.wordpress.com
Email: austintorn@aol.com
YouTube Videos: MagicalVideos Channel
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THINGS TO DO

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Hoaw Futheins Fiuto



Each Morning
Glory blossom
lives but for
A single day,
and is replaced by

Another each in
succession shining
In its morning glory,

Withering quickly
in the afternoon,
Then languishing
throughout the evening—
Their happy message
to us being that
Another day
will always come on.



The Good Old Days



Nostalgic Notions

Nostalgia



I learned to drive a ‘56 chevy, practicing on cemetery roads, going nice and slow, learning to work the gears, My father told me that this was a good place to learn, for if you run over someone, they’re already dead.



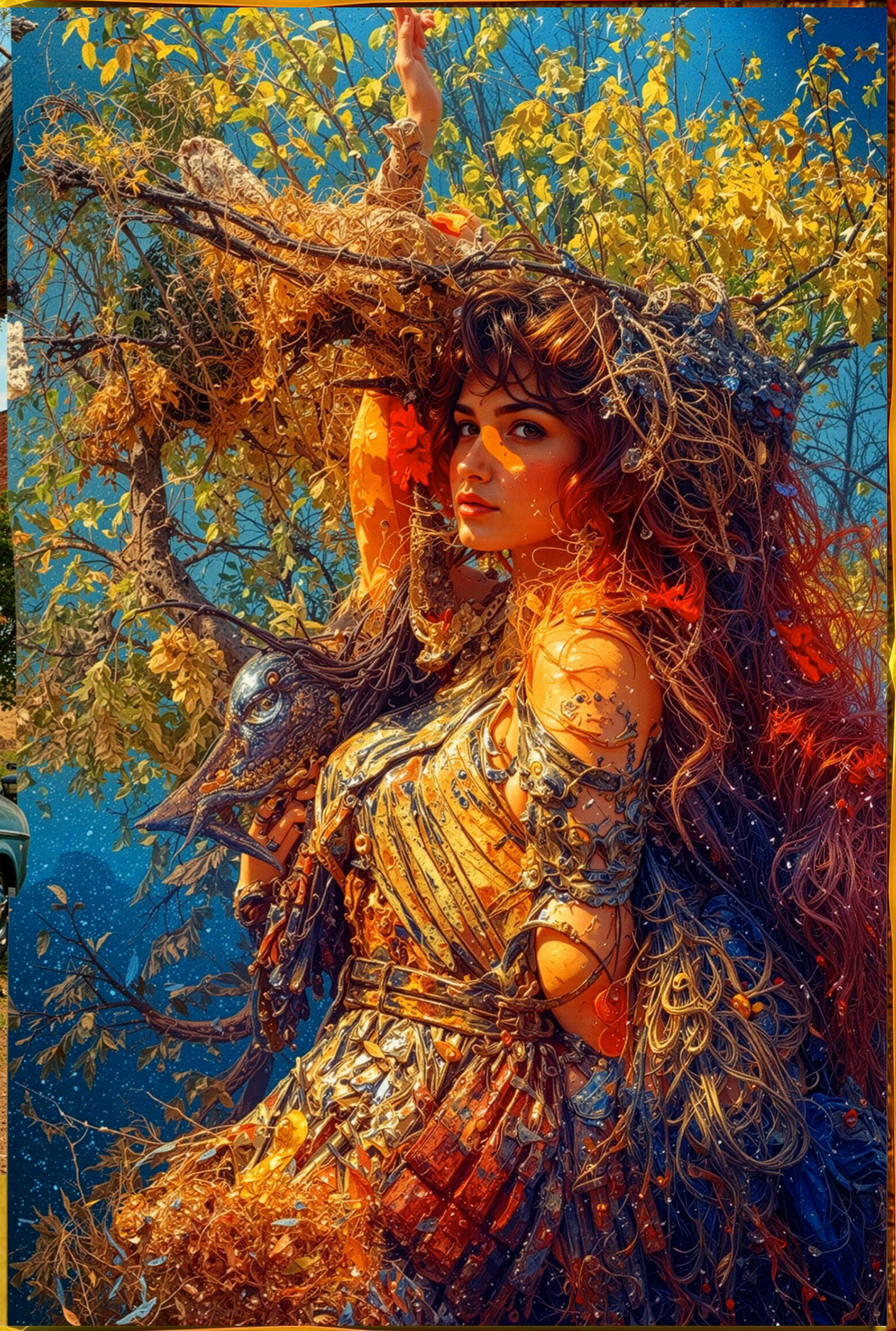
Gumballs were only a penny back in my time, and sometimes you even made me joyful.

I run my hand along a picket fence,
Counting heartbeats and running like a child,
Still carefully not stepping on the cracks,
Noting the furrowed ants bustling, thriving,





Wondering at a old chestnut tree that
Had somehow survived the blight, towering and
Ever so gently tilting the old sidewalk—
Presenting me with more ancient notions:



Of tire swings, swaying, hung from low branches,
Of a lemonade stand secure in the shade.

My youth comes flooding back to me, into me,
And so I continue to give it life:


HOR 4
FELTTIGIITR
HTBATRD
7IRSIT UNJORMACE
AD-23



The back door of a bread wagon opened,
Releasing the fresh-baked aroma;
Mother came out with a handful of dimes,
Buying what would've taken three hours to bake.


THRXOMCOMN
ERENCOA AUSUTIY
WHAP WIOTO PEAUTIAN
COMEL REVI. CHAGO
ENGCAN
COCIRY
SISTE'S
LUGIE O HUUTICGE
LAUMRITTY OUDS
Urpeet Oualter
Fertrann, Sbriskrul
Oeensate
and
Rirk Strriecol
Rienty
a Danuair
'Pieke Day Wat'
Asriroe Earter
50.Mt BLEG
AMOFRIMA
EXYUNT SEATION ERTORIS
RANNETT
RANNETT
RANNETT



On the houses' steps rested newspapers
And the sturdy rounded bottles of milk,
Compliments of Elsie the Cow, truly
A vision from the grazings of childhood.



We played games on these walkways, *like hopscotch,*
Roller skating, and marbles. My bag of jewels:
A cool green cat's-eye, a big blue boulder,
And varicolored pockmarked throwaways.






The Day Color was Invented
GRAND

Of tire swings. swaying,
hung from low branches.
And of lemonade stands.
secure in. the shade :
my youth came flooding
back to me into me.
And so I continued

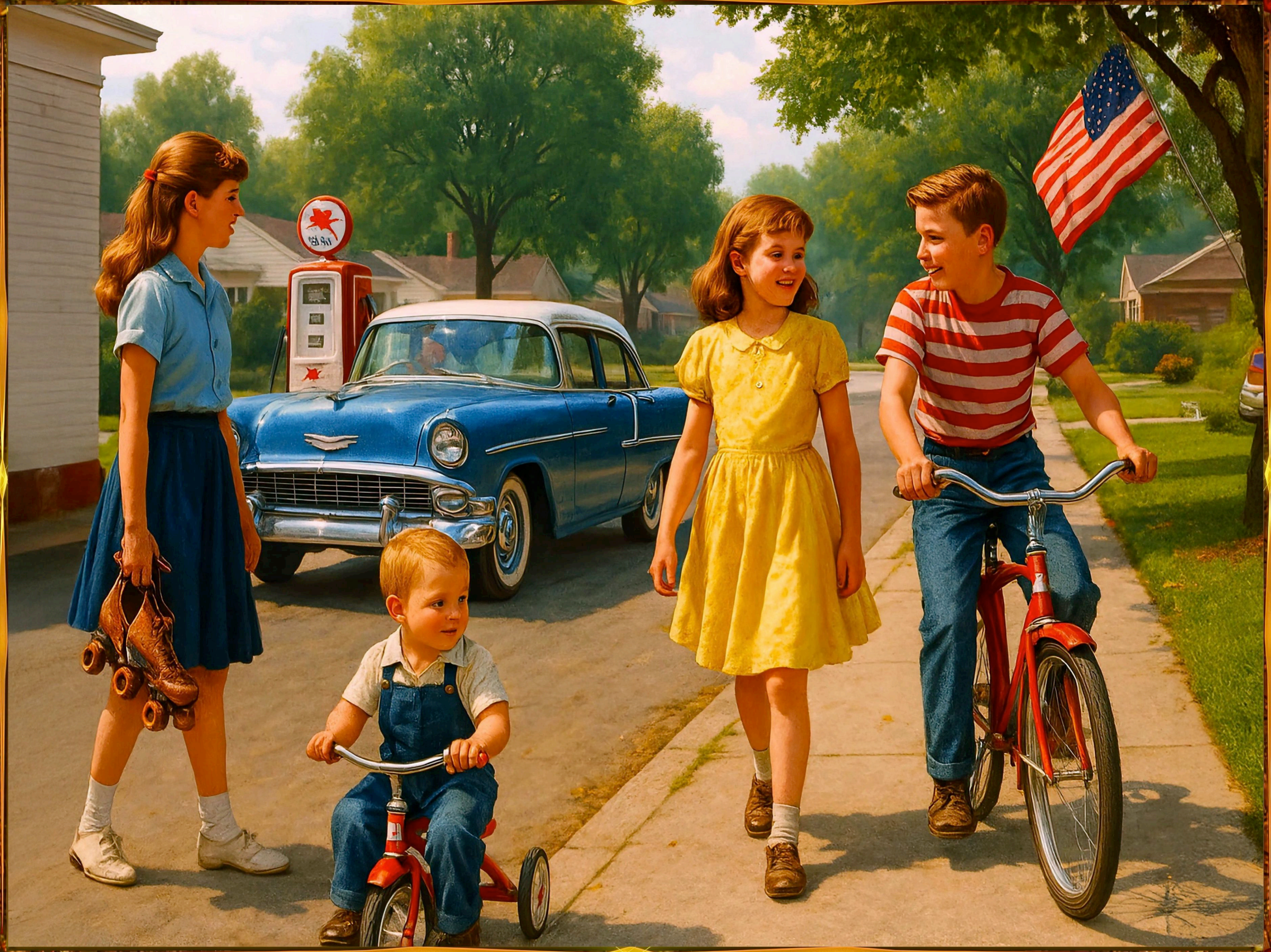
I remember the days when
the skies were filled with kites.











There—a lush garden lovingly attended
By an old lady, accompanied by bees
And butterflies, all of which cause further
Indulgences in my flights of fancy:









***As children*—and now if we're young at heart,**
We'd pause in play when that first butterfly
***Fluttered by,* that fragile ephemeral**
Vision of something almost heavenly—

A flower floating on the air, perhaps,
Signaling that our endless summer had
***Begun,* that something called "school" was now an**
Artifact of ancient history.



Did the butterfly first arise from the
Soul of the pansy, before human times—
One of those edenesque transformations
That was inexplicably magical?



The metamorphosis is still charming,
Arising from a caterpillar;



Amazingly, delicate as they seem,
They flutter all the way to Mexico,
And take their sweet time, alighting here-there,
Meandering from plant to bush to flower:

We learn that there's more fun along the way—
The journey as rewarding as "getting there".



There—
a lush garden
lovingly attended.
By an old lady,
accompanied by bees
And butterflies,
all of which caused further
Indulgences in
my flights of fancy



As children—and now
if we're young at heart,
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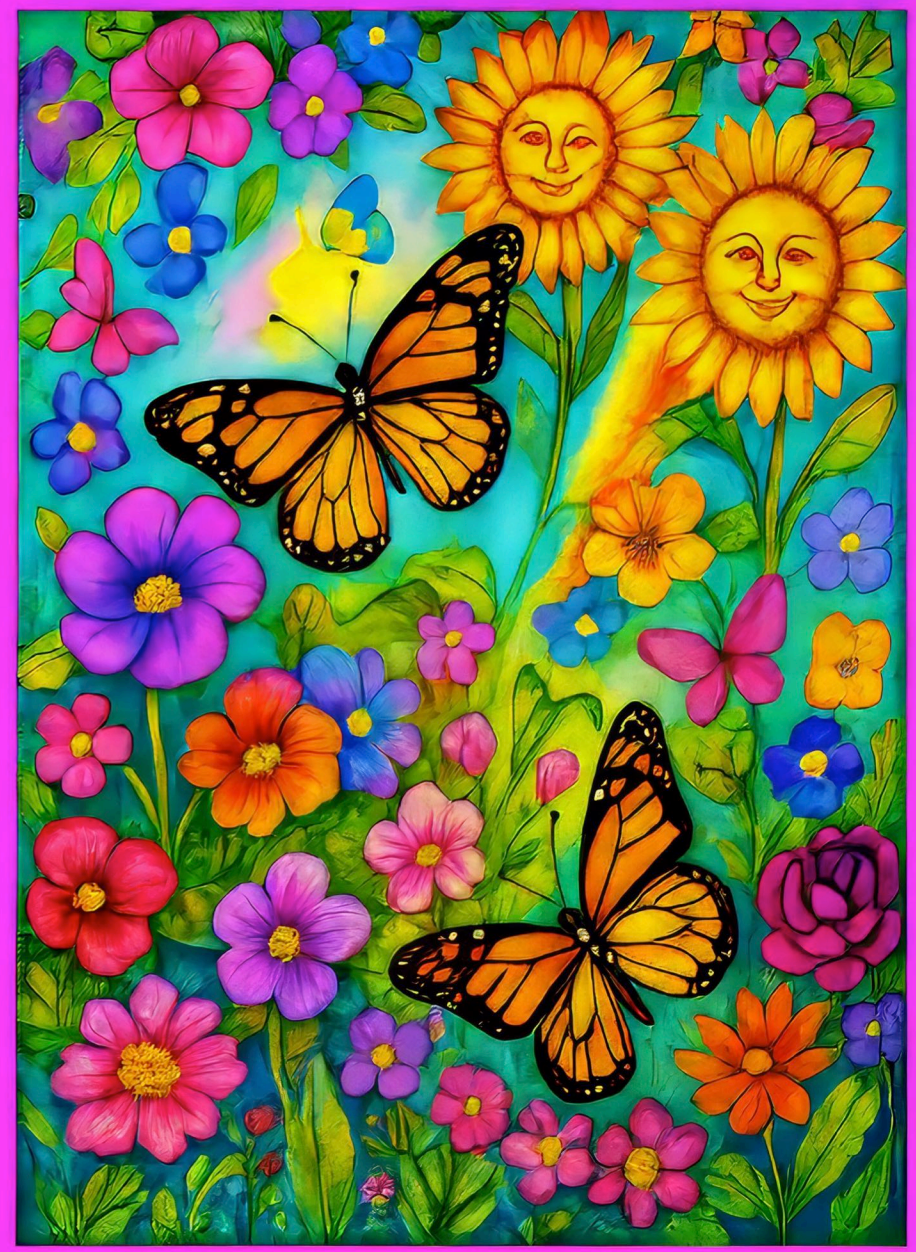

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Did the butterfly
first arise from the
Soul of the pansy -
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One of those
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The metamorphosis
is still charming.
Albeit but
from a caterpillar.
Amazingly delicate
as they seem.
They flutter all the
way to Mexico






And take their sweet time,
alighting here-there,
meandering from plant to
lush to flower
We learn that there's
more fun along the voyage,
the journey as
rewarding as "getting there'.



Still at the garden,
my mind back from flight,
The gardener
beckoned me inward, and
I leaned over the
fence to smell a flower,
And a thousand
memories reocurred:

During our carefree days
we'd swim the pool–
Diving off the side–
after pennies thrown.
Retrieving them from from
the bottomless deep.
Near the big drains–
then rising up, breathless.





During our carefree days we'd swim the pool,
Diving off the side after pennies thrown,
Retrieving them from the bottomless deep,
Near the big drains—then rising up, breathless.

On the way home from the large community pool,
We'd stop for a Green River soda.


FOUNTAIN SERVICE
DELICIOUS
SUNDAES
1 50¢


GITY SEAY
SAMERICA


HE TAR EUAT FIRE ROATTE
TRITAL HÄMETIC SUN
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MTORO
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SOLDIS WELON AMOMEHO HES - TO FROM SUAE
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Still at the garden, my mind back from flight,
The gardener beckons me inward, and
I lean over the fence to smell a flower,
As a thousand memories reoccur:





Each Morning Glory blossom lives but for
A single day, and is replaced by
Another, each in succession shining
In its morning glory, wilting in noon's heat—

Withering quickly in the afternoon,
Then languishing throughout the evening—
Their happy message to us being that
Another day will always come on.





The Amaranth intrigues—its leaves never fade,
Even long after death, ever remaining
Vivid red—could it be, somehow, that a
Portion of the infinite yet lives on?

There, the blinding luminosity of
Sunflowers; *we dried the seeds and ate them,*
Each still a glowing ember of memory
Of the bright days among a thousand suns.





I drank up Buttercup portions of the
Bright yellow light from the elfin goblets—
And entered the realm of fairies, pixies,
Fays, trolls, goblins, brownies, gremlins, and sprites.



A snapdragon. ***You had to know just where***
And how to hold one, just around the crease,
Then they would slowly open on the person...
And SNAP! Got you!





And then there were the weeds—honored
Because the plant that is the most alive
Is the one that's the wildest and grows fastest;
Thus, the dandelion is ever-present.

We'd walk down to the stream and pick
The yellow St. John's Wort for bouquet.
Then we'd pick dandelions for salad,
And dad made wine from the remainder.



Ah, nasturtiums. ***We called them ‘Nasties’,***
For they had a real sharp taste, but were colorful;
They grew in Grandma’s yard
When we were young; this had been our whole world.



Purple crocus, with its golden grains inside,
Grows near its romantic friend, the purple violet.
It’s the loving sun warming the virginal earth,
With love and life, into spring.









Once upon a time there was gold
At the end of the rainbow,
But now we find toxic gases,
So, an I.O.U. is written there.







We had cherries, and a grape arbor, too—
Eating them fresh, competing with squirrels
And birds, always forgetting to wash them,
Sour as they were, then spit out the seeds.




VRGRN
CHECRICN
MCHOCCCRGS



I walked on, and saw
a lake surrounded by
Old and broken down
vacation cabins...

Of course we were
never "there" yet when we
Asked, but soon dozed off,
tired of asking.

We dug
the worms at night,
keeping them moist,
And got up with the
sun to fish, and then
Skinned them
and cooked them
for lunch or dinner—
This to me is
America Remembered.

Dad was
always out fishing—
my brother too,
and me less often.
Now I clearly see
That fishing has little
to do with fish.
But with cool
breezes, moist air
peace, and quiet

I wore my life preserver
all day long:
Once I leaned over
for a closer look
and fell in
swimming with fishes,
then pushed up
my life jacket
now broken in.



I walk on and see a lake surrounded by
Old and broken down vacation cabins.
Of course we were never “there yet” when we
Asked, but soon dozed off, tired of asking.


251
B7010 10025
MADUE PARK



No one ever gets up as early
As children on a vacation, and so by 7AM
We'd already seen chipmunks, pools of minnows,
And had collected shells and driftwood.



Waves chased us up and down the
Shore as we ran along barefoot.
Everyone was still asleep; we owned the world.


Printear



The lake water was too cold to stay in for long,
So we made little dug-out pools near the shore
And swam in them on those
Summer days that could never be too long.









Afterwards, back home, a tired but
Soothing and drowsy feeling soon came over us,
The effect of sun, sand, and water,
So we all conked out and fell asleep early.



We dug the worms at night, keeping them moist,
And got up with the sun to fish, and then
Skinned them, and cooked them for lunch or dinner—
This to me is America Remembered.



Dad was always out fishing—my brother, too,
And me less often. **Now I clearly see**
That fishing has little to do with fish,
But with cool breezes, moist air, peace, and quiet.




GOIN
HERE



I wore my life preserver all day long—
Once I leaned over for a closer look
And fell in, swimming with the fishes,
Then pushed up, my life jacket now broken in.









We puttered to a mysterious island;
There we found—nothing, but camped and had lunch,
Feeling like pirates, and telling no one
About it until a whole day later.


SUNTLA


Meshanoy
Shyamena
Cirks


Lotería







At night we watched the bears forage for scraps
At the garbage dump; however, one night
The bins were empty when the bears came out—
Then they all turned and looked over at us!

Mom used to say “Come in out of the rain”,
But nowadays, the sun is dangerous,
Unless we wear sunblock, so she says,
“Have enough sense to get out of the sun!”





Kids now play Nintendo or go to the arcades or just hang around the mall, but we youngsters played kick the can, hopscotch, and especially hide and seek—I remember once counting to a hundred and then finding out that everyone cise had left town.



No one ever gets up as early as children on a vacation and so by 7AM wed already seen pumpkins, pools of minnows and had co lected shells and driftwood. No one knew that we were out—





Mom used to say
"Come in out of the rain,"
But, nowadays,
"The sun is dangerous,
Unless we wear sunblock,"
so she says,
'Have enough sense
to get out of the sun!'

To keep cool,
we once carried
pinwheels, fans,
Parasols, and sucked
on a piece of ice.

Now with TV. internet,
and cooled air
We stay inside of
the house all day long.

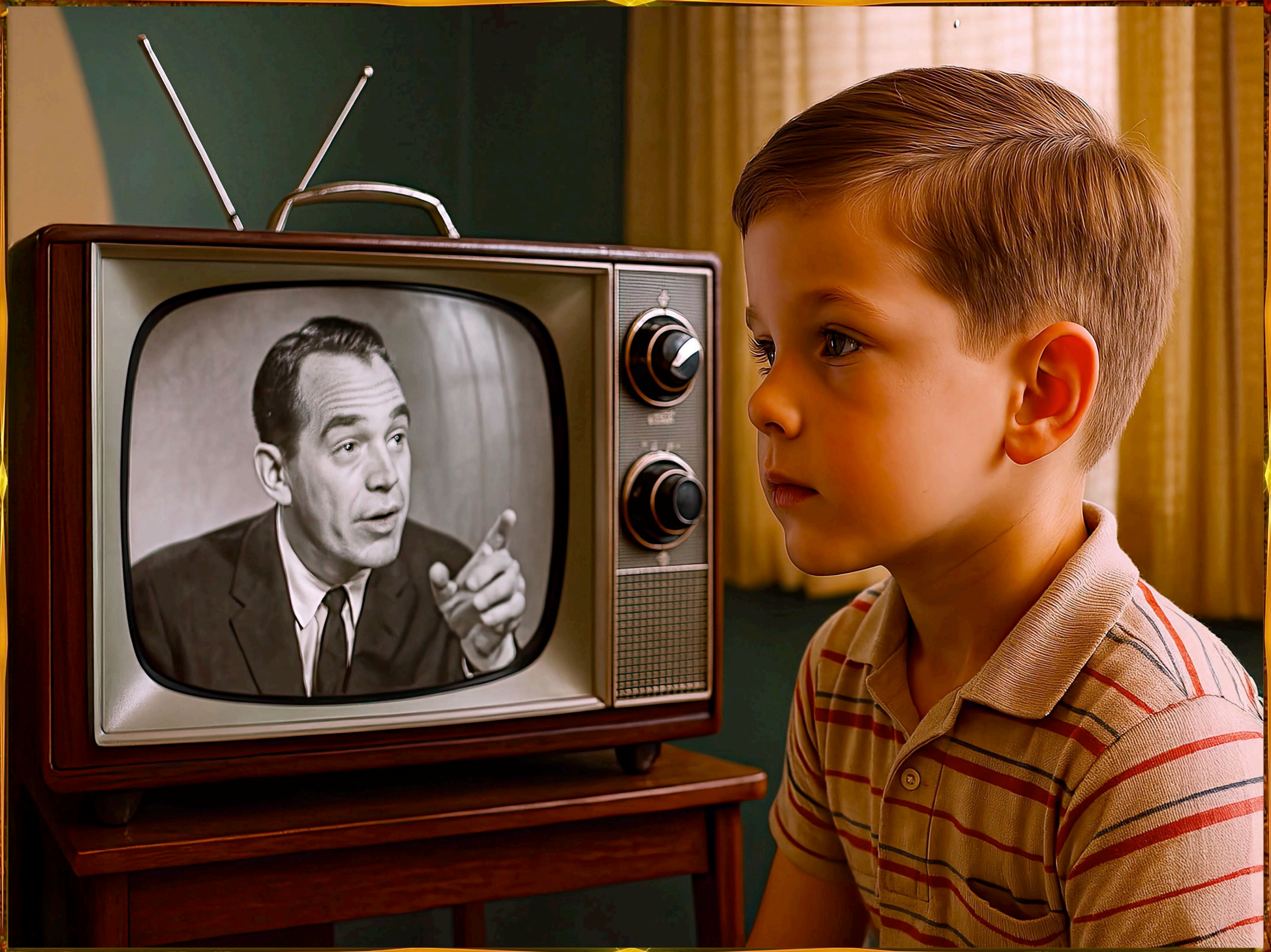




After a storm, when the sun returned,
We'd run out to see if there was a rainbow—
That shimmering otherworldly vision of
The colorful secret of simple white light.



How are colors made from three primaries?
Why is the sky blue? What unknown colors hide?
Well, color was invented in the 60's—
Just look at TV shows made before then!



You had to know just where and how to hold Snapdragons, just around the crease, then slowly they would open on the unsuspecting persop and then SNAP! Got you!

How are colors
made from
three primaries?
Why is the sky blue?
What unknown
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Well, color was
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Just look at TV shows
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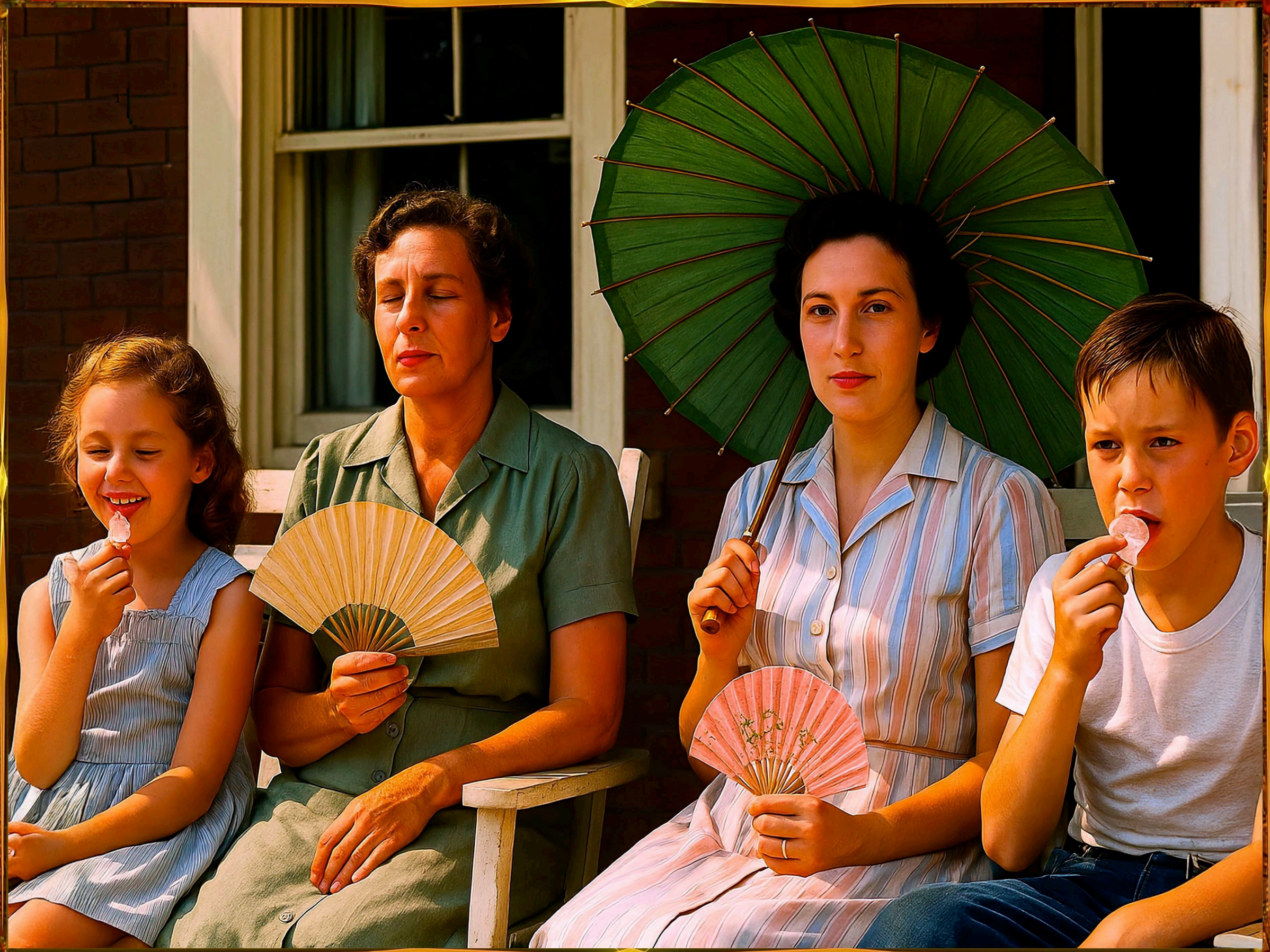
To keep cool we once carried pinwheels, fans,
Parasols, and sucked on a piece of ice.
Now, with TV, internet, and cool air,
We stay inside of the house all day long.













By eavesdropping on the party line, we could
Hear real scandals and idle rumors, and,
If it was more interesting than watching
The grass grow, we stayed to hear the whole story.

Before the invention of the telephone,
All was conveyed by tell-a-woman, **but, now,**
We only answer to computers, saying,
“To talk to a human being, please hang up”.

By eavesdropping
on the party line,
we could Hear real
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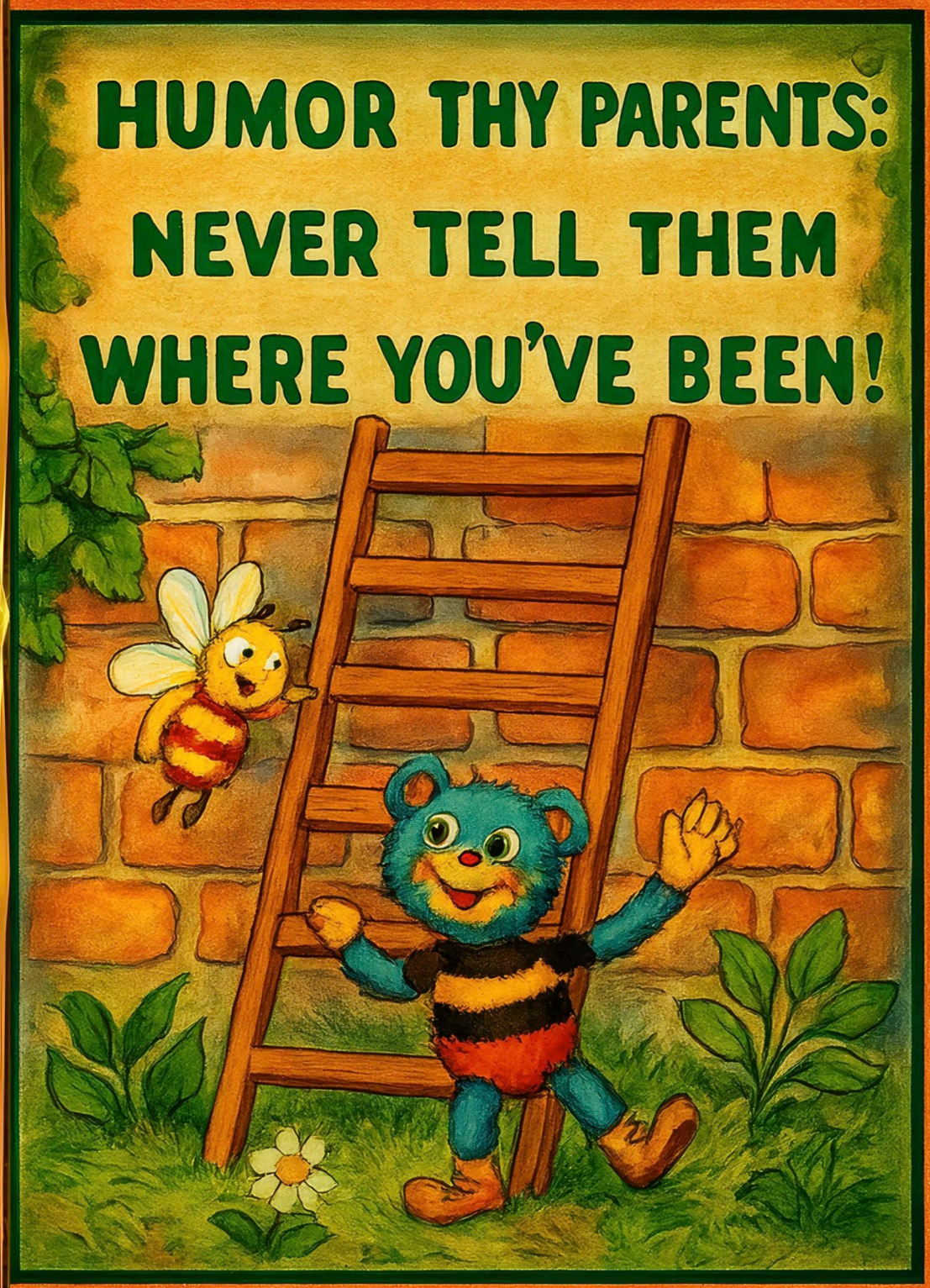
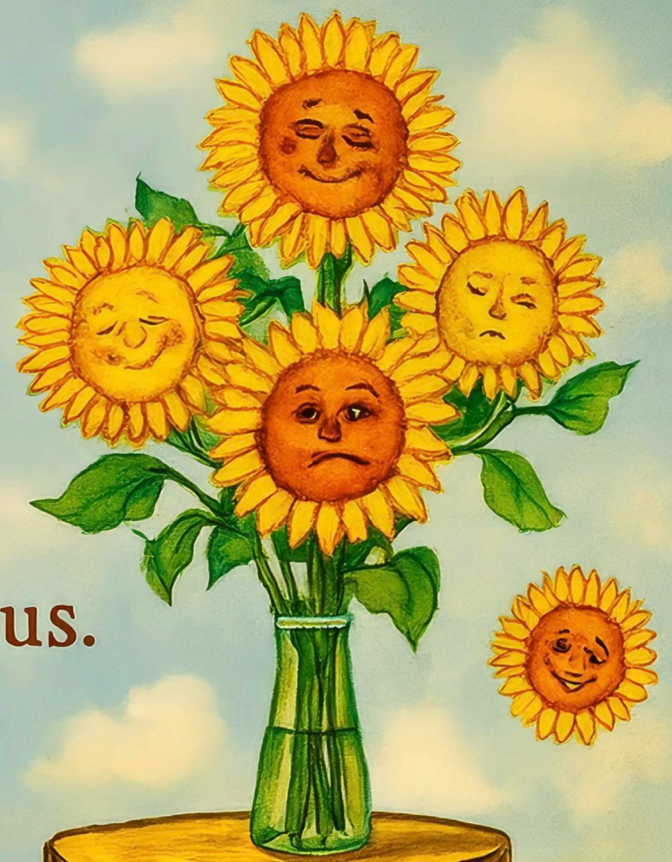
Before the invention of the telephone, all was conveyed by toll-a-woman, but now we only answer to computers, saying, "To talk to a human being please hang up"



HUMOR THY PARENTS:
NEVER TELL THEM
WHERE YOU'VE BEEN!



Moods
are
Contagious.









The corner market carried everything—
Eden's shiny red apples called out,
"Touch me, take me, eat me", and, soon, trouble
Was at hand, but it was crispy, sweet.


PLAYY COMETTICAL
BART HE BRACK
TRIZY BARGDER
Grimet Caulity
BRAI
AMAPIA



I rode my bike everywhere—I always crashed
On the killer hill, on roller skates, too;
Now I drive my car there, carefully—
Yes, I'm finally getting over the hill!





Rural cemeteries were parks, too, back then,
So *we played near the duck pond, giving them bread.*
Some years later I returned, like a duck
That had been away for too many summers.



I figured how to catch a duck in a pond
By swimming underwater beneath it.
It squawked and tried to bite on the way home;
I traded it for a dog at the pet store.



There were monkey bars for the climbers, and
Seesaws tottering for the restless, and
A refreshing sprinkler to cool off in, but
There was always some kid sitting on it.


MOLVON SEYS
PRONDY CUILAYARS
0708





We made greeting cards, keepsakes, with ribbons,
Lace, assorted scraps, and original words.
Now, we buy ready made cards with fluffy words—
In a day or two they are in the trash.





D156
V RUIR
T AHE
SINE OF US







Always picked up a penny for good luck,
And pins, too, for even more good fortune.
I found a horseshoe all of the sudden—
‘Twas bad luck ‘twas still on the horse’s foot!





Simple pleasures are as free as ever:
The sights, sounds, and scents of nature; picnics,
Reading, writing, giving, riding, playing—
It’s hard to ever get bored, isn’t it!


Famom
ANIBLIAI
CROLHITISLA

We used to lay out all of our baseball cards
On the sidewalk, trading famous players.
My friend had seven Mickey Mantle cards,
But he wouldn't trade even one to me.


WERONCIA
BAD-HOM-ITZUREIX
R



We got the two cent deposit from bottles found,
And used popsicle sticks to glue into little boxes.
Then I got hooked on cigarette packs,
Sometimes finding a smoke left inside.




KUKLHA
AINY FAM FRVA RUDS
BE LAXYSTED 350



On Decoration Day, **now called Memorial Day,**
We'd run crepe paper through the spokes
Of our bike wheels and ride behind the parade;
Now it's a pretty dead day, but that is only fitting.




HE PIME HATS
R86AD



We set off firecrackers and sparklers galore;
One kid even lit up sticks of dynamite.


Crochick




I collected a lot of coins as a boy,
And traded in dollars at the bank for rolls,
Finding a few old dimes and steel pennies.
The hunt for the 1950D nickel goes on.



We were afraid of the scissors grinding man,
But we all screamed when the ice cream man
Came ringing... asking for a piece of dry ice
When he reached way way back in.


CAANINEO
SOHNEG BEATO
EPMUNIT SUNGBRTH
STUDF/ 88U562Y
SEADTN G 80 ULZ
9503218
184·003

Then there was stealing apples. *As soon as*
We knew that our neighbor was occupied,
We'd climb her fence up onto her garage...
Nothing tasted better than a stolen apple!





Men always wore hats in the old days.
I can remember trying on my father's many hats.
Now we must wear many hats in life;
As for dad's hats, they're all old hat now.


COURTEAUE. A MUSHY
ECCOUP THES
MARRY

Who ever remembers the leaves but
The child in you who raked them into a pile,
So that it could be jumped into.
Ah, the smell of burning leaves on an autumn night.



We began fixing the stone wall
By filling the gaps from the rocky rubble,
Putting one stone on two and two stones on one,
For stability, sometimes having to jiggle them
Or turn them upside down to gain a better fit.



Large stones were saved for the bottom
And the flat ones reserved for leveling the top.
Odd shaped stones formed the middle section
And had to be twisted and tilted,
As in a Tetris game, until they fit snug.



I first learned about love from attic postcards
Showing the formalities of hand kissing,





So, when I bowed down and kissed
The hand of the girl down the street,
Inviting her to play in the sandbox,
She most readily accepted.





I found an old sepia print of a young lady;
She was my grandfather's sweetheart.
He gave her the gift of the spring flowers,
The wealth of the summer hours,



The colorful walks of autumn,
And the winter's warm fire.
The spirit of love still lives in them,
Calling them back, to/from somewhere in time.




2000
GM





We had to sit through the Catholic Latin mass,
Most of which time was spent either
Looking over the minute details of the person ahead
Or nudging someone's shoe or lunch box
Along the floor until it had quite disappeared.

Of course, to kill even more time,
One could imagine climbing the wall buttresses
Barehanded, maneuvering among the ceiling arches,
Sliding down the lamp wires and such—



Until rudely bumped back into reality
By the nun siting behind, the nun with eagle eyes
Who could detect the slightest lack of attention.



Yes, a mass was a long and difficult time to suffer,
Especially the endless periods of kneeling,
But it was the tasty dreams of milk and honey donuts
That carried me through,

For now and then I'd catch a whiff
From my donut bag of my breakfast,
Which everyone knew meant breaking-the-fast.





I also had, from Bill and Betty's store,
Some of those penny candy sheets,
The long narrow ones with about
Thirty rows of three dots of candy across—



The kind of candy that you could
Never seem to cleanly remove,
And so you always had to ingest
Some of the paper lining as well.



I dropped by the Olde Flower Shop
For the first time ever on Mother's Day,
Making sure that one saw me
Doing such a sissy thing; however,



My thirty-five cents wouldn't cover it.
So, on the way home I had an idea;
I stole old lady Johnson's prize rose
And gave it to my mom, bugs, thorns and all.



I bought some small wax bottles that contained,
As now I see it, mere colored water,
But, then, as I thought as a boy,
Some sort of elixir of the gods.





The songs of larks rose to greet us
In our hot-air balloon, as we rose high,
Piercing the stillness of the sky.
Way down below, we could see the wheat ripening,

And the flower gardens, in which we could, somehow,
Although far above, sense the bees bumbling along,
Laden with the pollen
Of the foxglove and the honeysuckle.





When we tired of playing pool,
There were always the pinball machines,
With their bells. buzzers. and flashing lights.

For a few brief moments all life was reduced
To keeping that ball bouncing and out of the drain.
Something like what we had to do
With our own fragile lives as teenagers.


SHONIT BQUY
Kimeson
Heris
1964001S





Grandpa's chicken ranch was all that was left
Of his great farm of the old days
And so we had eggs and more eggs,
And, sad to say, roast chicken.

Then we started naming all the chickens,
For there was an unwritten rule
That you couldn't kill and cook a chicken
To whom you'd given a name.



The more adventurous, or foolish,
Of us boys would sneak up on the
Bees as they gathered nectar from the Hollyhocks,
And we'd quickly bend the flower around
And over them, trapping them inside.



After a few rough shakes,
We'd listen to their aggravated buzz
And then let them fly away.
Now and then we'd get stung, but not very often.







We saw a ghostly glow coming from the foliage
And what looked like Christmas lights
Spread on the evergreens and bushes.
In the flowers, we saw fireflies luming them.

The day pours life into roots with sunlight.
Flowers bloom, showering us with delight.
In a blossom, a glow-worm blinks its light,
Kindling the flames of a romantic night.





The glow-worms, fairy stars come down to ground,
Gleam the shadowy woods through summer's round.
During the gloaming they warm up their lights,
And then metamorphose wings for their flights.

The dusk deepens, night's pot of tea steepens;
Silence descends, as when a gift opens.
Eventide rises. On high, Scorpius camps;
The eyes catch stars, like fireflies in lamps.



The sky is lit, a twinkling promenade,
Of mating calls from luminated pods,
Tracers pulsing wild, searching thoughts that smile—
From fireflies named Winkin’, Blinkin’, and Nod.

Flashing desire, the glow-fly twinkles across
The starry summer sky, love’s energy unspent,



Searching through the darkness, with passion’s might,
For the beacon of her consent—the surging sight
Of love’s pulsing, green and yellow light.

The reply: “Yes, oh yes”, alight, she winks, to woo.
Now he becomes a firefly, as at once she does too.



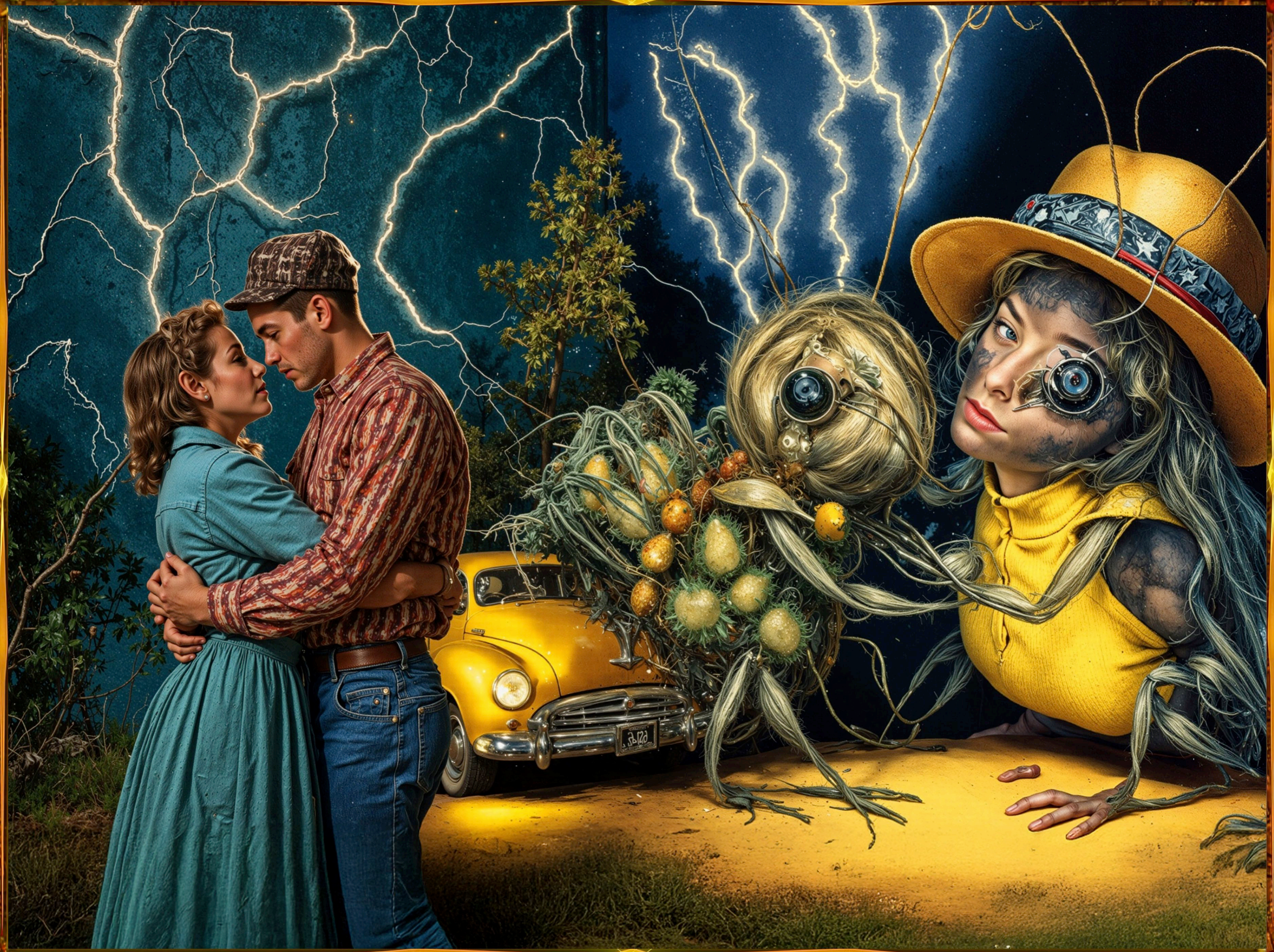
“Come light your lantern and mine with good cheer;
We’re magic lamps—our spirits dance in there.
Our beginnings and ends are of nowhere,
So let’s radiate, since for now we’re here!”

In a closing flower, they together make their stead,
Blinking, winking, in the seclusion of its petal bed.
This dance of light and love—their honeymoon,
Brightens the night—till it looks much like noon.



Their jolts and bolts, surging, merge in currents,
Sweeping back and forth, as they signal delight—

Fires luming and oft reluming
The flames of love, in electric hugs—
For they have by now become lightning bugs.



they see the ghostly glow in flowers,
the lightning bugs giving electric hugs.

the night deepens, and silence, stars–
like fireflies in lamps.



The glow-worm rose into the summer sky.
Thinking love's light unspent - now a firefly
Sighing the beacon or reply - they then,
With electric hugs, became lightning bugs.





At the zoo, we saw various birds from exotic lands, their hues unbelievably vivid and deep; they even talked! We could only imagine what they thought.



Whether an old jukebox whose arm picked up 45s
Or a new one spinning shiny CDs,
The charm was the same.

Take your partner, put in your coins, choose a song,
Watch the movements of the mechanism,
And dance your way into her heart.


MOKA



First there was Go Fish, then Solitaire and Rummy.
Each getting more and more complicated,
Until we mastered Hearts, our favorite.



Today we often play Bridge
But we still play Hearts together on rainy days.







Rock and roll music was not allowed for some kids, although teenagers still got yelled at plenty. Music, if loud, was not tolerated, for it could make you go deaf. As for Elvis the pelvis, forget it—he was way too sinful.



I can finally reveal the secret place:
Follow the old railroad tracks along the river
And head uphill just beyond the pond,

Following the faint path up to a large bush,
Behind which is a cave entrance.


MOTREM AMARY AM KBAMUS
AMERICANe


ORGLANSEN

Kids now play Nintendo or go to the arcades
Or just hang around the mall,

But we as youngsters played kick-the-can
And especially hide-and-seek.
1 remember once counting to a hundred
And then finding out that everyone else had left town.





As the men were away at war,
The women took off their stockings
And donated them for the making
Of balloons and parachutes

So a soldier could land safely on many legs.
Now women have panty hose, thigh highs,
And many other variations to hold men up.



Our parents took us to the great water slide.
After sizing it up for a long while
And watching people plunge into the water,
Sometimes coming up gasping for air,

We deemed it dangerous enough to try out
And had many wild rides down.
It's gone now, too risky,
And so liable to cause lawsuits.


We had cherries,
and a grape arbor too—
Eating them fresh,
competing with squirrrels
And birds, always
forgetting to wash them.
So sour they were,
then spit out the seeds.





The Atomic Fireball factory across from our school
Burned down one day, we all watching.
The next day there were fireballs rolling around
The classroom, and our parents received a call.





I learned to drive a ’56 chevy, practicing on the cemetery roads, going very slow, learning to work the gears. My father told me that this was a good place to learn, for, if you run over someone, they’re already dead!





Gum balls were only a penny back in my time, and sometimes you even got a prize, too. *Some kids said that there was a real diamond ring in a gum ball machine somewhere.*

We got lots of cute plastic junky little toys and charms from the gum ball machine. Perhaps the cranky, turning noise that the machine made was the real charm.



Remember as a girl you played mother and a boy played daddy and together you played house, using your doll as the baby?



Yes, playing house started innocently enough, but as we got older this was not a game that our parents wanted us to play, *so we played doctor instead!*



Along the old woodside trail we caught the secret scents of the Jasmine, deciphered the messages of the Honeysuckle, sensed the signals of Wisteria,



recalled the memories of Rosemary, inhaled the sweet breath of Violets, heard the thoughts of the Pansies, and felt the youth of the Primrose.





Take this yucky looking medicine; it will grow hair on your chest and make you big and strong like dad. But, I'm a girl! Just give it to me and I'll hold my nose and take it, but really I'll just give it to the dog.

Did you play post office, mailing a letter in the closet with a friend who you had a crush on?


HAN
RATE RINIC
TO WIARE
KNEO M SHMESIRIN
AALUGAN



Or play spin the bottle with a hopeful sweetheart but end up kissing the dog when the bottle pointed that way, happening just when you thought that you had the market cornered!



It snowed half of the night and so we thought we'd have a day off from school; we really didn't want to go anywhere on such a dangerous day—we'd go anywhere but school. **The school bus had not shown up.**

School was still on, in the snow, but the bus couldn't make it up our hill; however, then along came a snow plow and ruined our day off.



Reading was the main diversion in the old days, since there was no TV. Children's books were lavishly illustrated, as seen now in the libraries' special collections.

Chromolithographic colors were vivid, but laborious to create—yes, they don't make colors like that anymore!


TOP CHOMAT ITENLIER.



Wow, that screeching cat has to go, for there's no mice and I can’t catch my sleep, but, oops, there's a rat, and so, instead, the cat has a home for good.

At first, I wasn’t even going to waste color film on my black-and-white cat named Oreo, but then I noticed that his little red tongue sticking out.



The New Commandment







The songs of larks rose to greet us in our hot-air balloon, piercing the stillness of the sky. Way down below we could see the wheat ripening, and, near it, the flower gardens,

in which gardens we could somehow, although far above, sense the bees bumbling along, laden with the pollen of the foxglove and the honeysuckle.





If you were old or sick you might regret or pine,
And give anything to have pack some better time.
But now you are young and fine, so glad, smile.

The Perfect Day



The hot-air balloop slowly inflated, their panels looking like a rainbow, containing every color under the sun. Up, up, and away toward Heaven's spectrum they rose, coloring the blue sky, drifting on air like



They were like a bag of lewels, my many and assotted marbles, One day ‘ Brought home a colossal cook nearly an gesy 4 33, a big blue uler and various puthiplickal hula hoops. Never mind if the marbles get strate. ched on lne conerctic! autong roll just before the hole.



The songs of lark-rose to greet us in our hot air balloon, ptercing the sullness. of the sky. Way down Below. we could gre the winter nobis onward here at the Boacar pardern. in which we could somehow clight. Around. we observed the yees bumbling along with the polen



In the back of the yard, just past birrdbath and the grape arbor. were bleeding hearts. Tulips. Bivebells, Honeysuckle on the fence, orange spotted Lilies. Black-Eyed Susans, and Rosas. everwbere—



The plant that the mest its. the que the is the dandelion—and the theredir. dandelion is often more even present flower: alm though the dandelion is presevend often —of its transro-matio a sonefnct.

If flowers had never existed,
could you have imagined them?





Joy and exuberance are spring's largesse.
Winter, full its peace–its bounty is rest



The lighthouse at land's end drew in the ships lost in the mist and fog, its rotating beacon flashing and sweeping the sea.

I sat on the rocks at the edge of the world one day and bathed in the lighthouse's beam's glow, each pulse energizing me like some external heartbeat.

THE YEAR

WINTER storms the YEAR
In the MONTH of Brau-new-airy,
Then FEB-BURIES us in SNOW…
March, Lady *April! Spring!* —
Let's reign as we May
With sum(mer)maids
Named *June* and *Ju-lie,*
Until, after *A-gust* of
HOT withering *wind,*
The sunny FIRE burns out—
'Cept embers, when
Leaves FALL into OCT-TOMB-BURR—
Till—no leaves, no sunlight,
No sky, no *warmth*—No-vember!
Next de RAIN, de sleet, de COLD-
De-cember,
When all that we can do
Is but sweet Remember.

— *P. Torney*© 2004 —



WINTER-EMBERS

November, December,
and Remember are
the winter's embers.



The attraction of a sailor for the opposite sex is heightened by his long absence from them, as are all his senses. passions, and deep feelings—

an exuberance unparalleled and quite irresistible to the young lady, who soon closes the distance for many of the same reasons.





I had many choices at the corner store, often choosing a Mary Jane, some round candies stuck on a long paper strip, little wax bottles with liquid in them, sodas, and so on, until my allowance ran out.



Oranges, like Violets and Cherries, were named after a color, or was it the other way around?



In the back of the yard, just past the birdbath and the grape arbor, were Bleeding Hearts, Tulips, Bluebells, Honeysuckle on the fence, orange spotted Lilies, Black-Eyed Susans, and Roses everywhere—an old-fashioned garden that was always new to us.



The New Calendar



The Day Color was Invented

The craze now is for designer jeans or for new jeans that appear to be worn-out (steam-rollered). I remember my grandfather wearing worn-out dungarees, but back then no one else would be caught dead in them.





Playing near the railroad was irresistible, no matter how dangerous we knew it was. We'd hitch a ride on the slow moving trains, sit in the boxcars, climb up to the roof, put coins on the tracks to flatten them—



A rich kid Evan put a half-dollar there, and talk to the man in the little house who worked the crossing gates and rang the warning bells.


UALIUARDAY









Work on the new Congress expressway had begun and so we'd check on its progress, often for many years. Whole blocks of neighborhoods had to be taken out and bodies from a cemetery had to be relocated.

Shooting Pool





All of billiards they say is so true,
For my father bought me a table too.
Being in the right spot at the right time
Was my pool fortune created on the dime.



After homework was all done we'd make the run,
In billiards, playing banks with carom fun.
We'd have to hug the girls to teach them how,
And even demonstrated 'kissing', wow!



After school we too played some pool
In the smoky hall, where gambling fools
Bet their lunch money time and time again,
Where too a few ladies mixed among the men.







I won an Army eight-ball contest,
Winning a carton of useless cigarettes,
So I gave them away, for the play's the prize,
Keeping me here and away from paradise.



I haven't played much in fifty years,
Nor have I drunk even that many beers,
And some long shots I still had to make,
But the short easy steps were best to take.



I turned to tennis, the theme much the same,
Though the bounce was but upon the ground:
Don’t look up too soon from the knowing aim,
And follow through; works too for other games.



Never played much golf, but did a few times,
Driving was all right, but nothing really fine,
But upon the putting green my eye was right,
Sinking putts like billiard balls, left and right.

(I used the other end of the golf club,
Shooting the golf ball from that ’cue stick’.)



Wandering late night, hiding from headlights,
We sneak past the village’s ghostly sites,
Through alley, yard, avenue, and street,
Towards Maple Park, to our secret retreat.





We lay in the park this night, looking higher;
How strange that all the stars are on fire!
Are they above us or below us? Both!
We clutch the grass, so as not to fall forth.



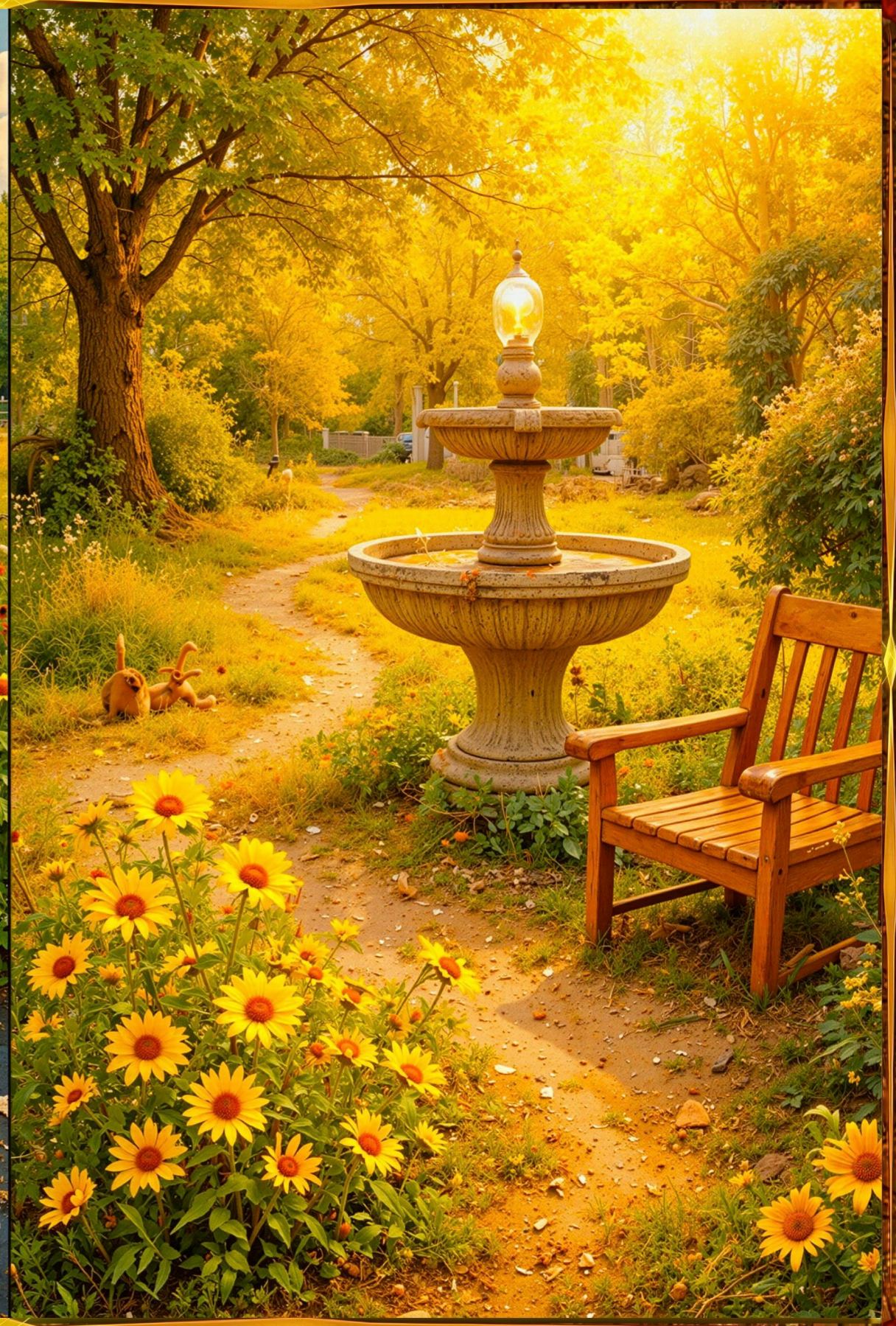




There’s not always a full moon and high tide,
Nor life’s magic moments, so, they high ride
When they arrive, and as such they thrive
As nostalgic remembrances quite live.







THE YEAR

With the Thirteenth Month added: Remember







Hail!
Winter storms the Year
In the month of Brand-new-airy,





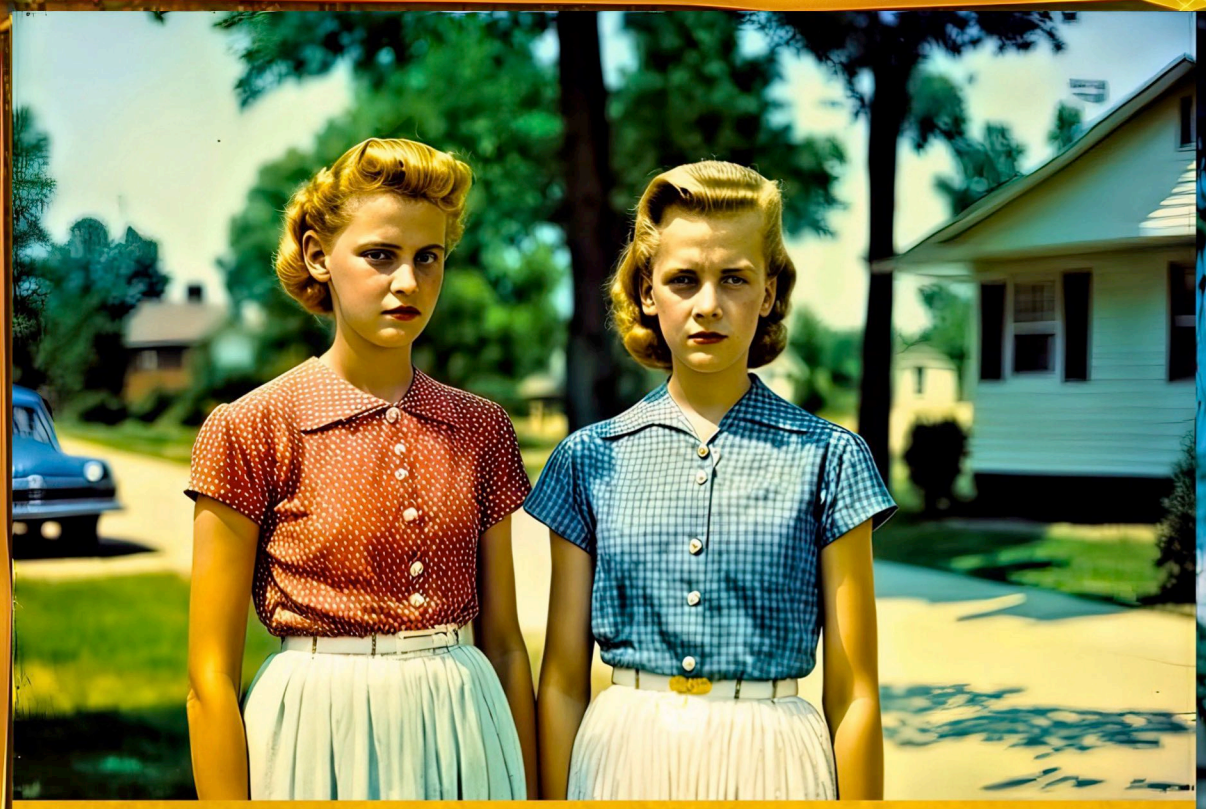


Then Feb-buries us in snow!





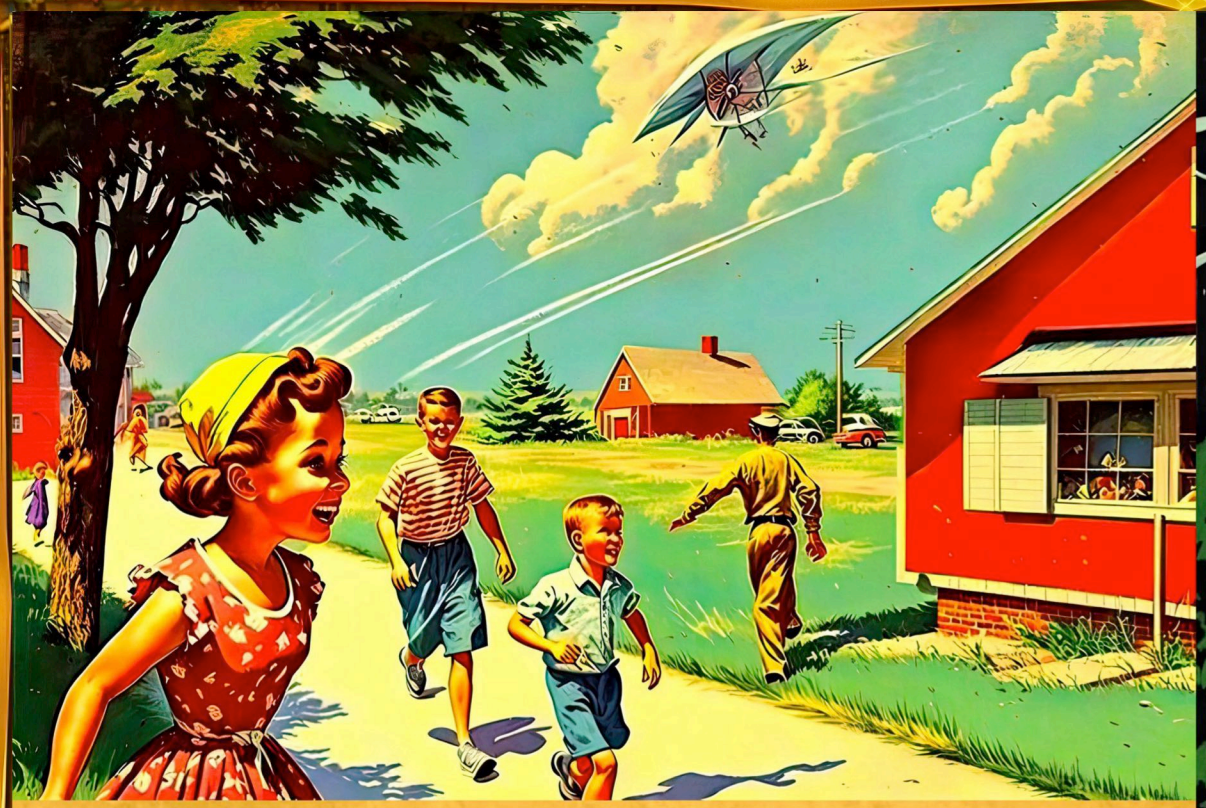
March, Lady April! Spring!—
Let's reign as we May,



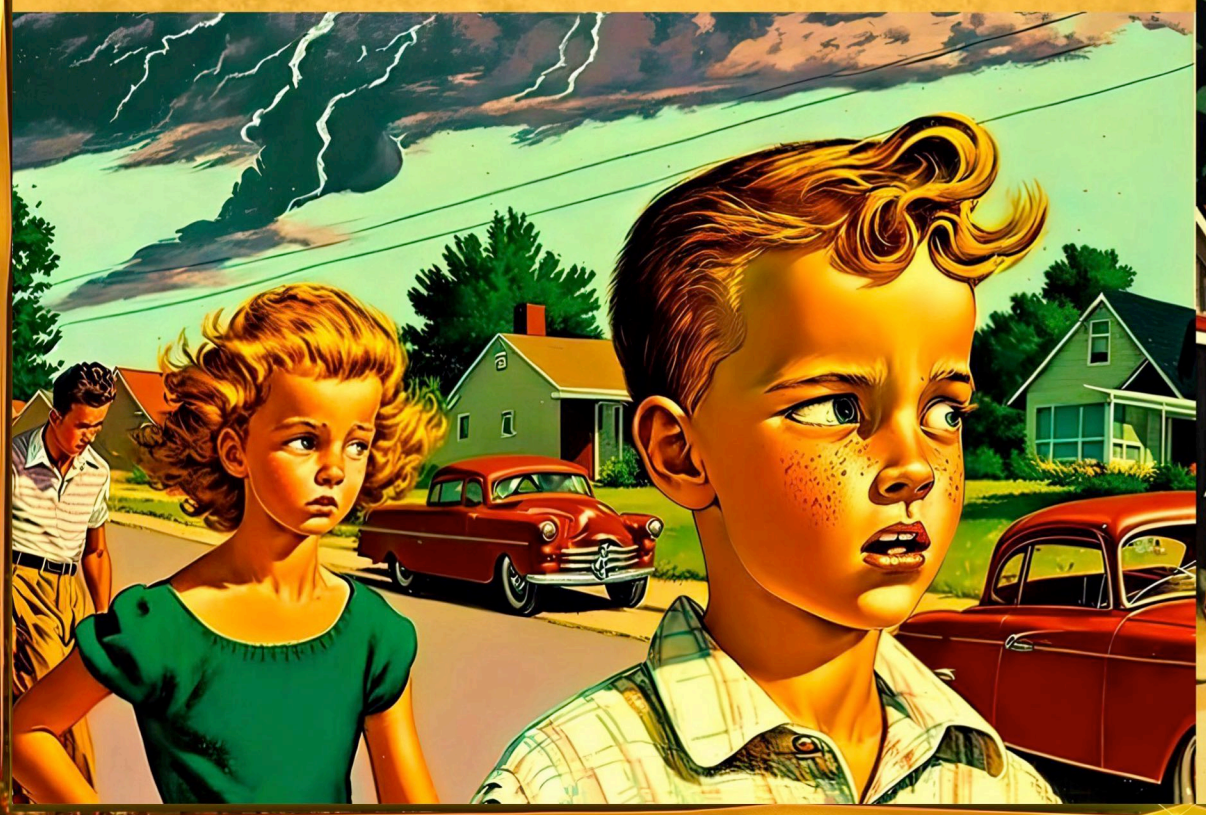
With summer maids
Named June and Ju-lie,







Until, after A-gust of
Hot withering wind,



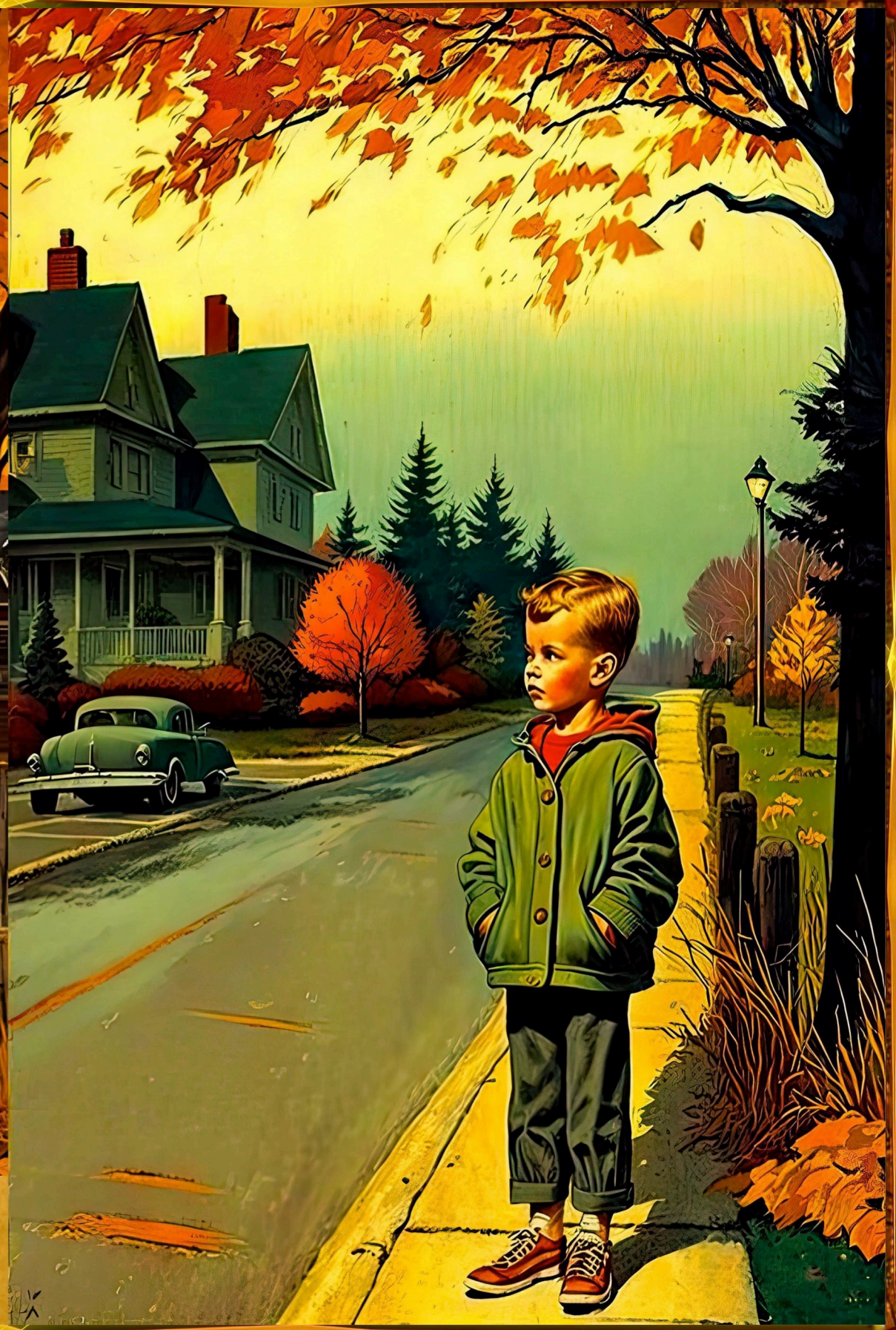








The sunny fire burns out—
’Cept embers, when
Leaves Fall into Oct-tomb-burr—







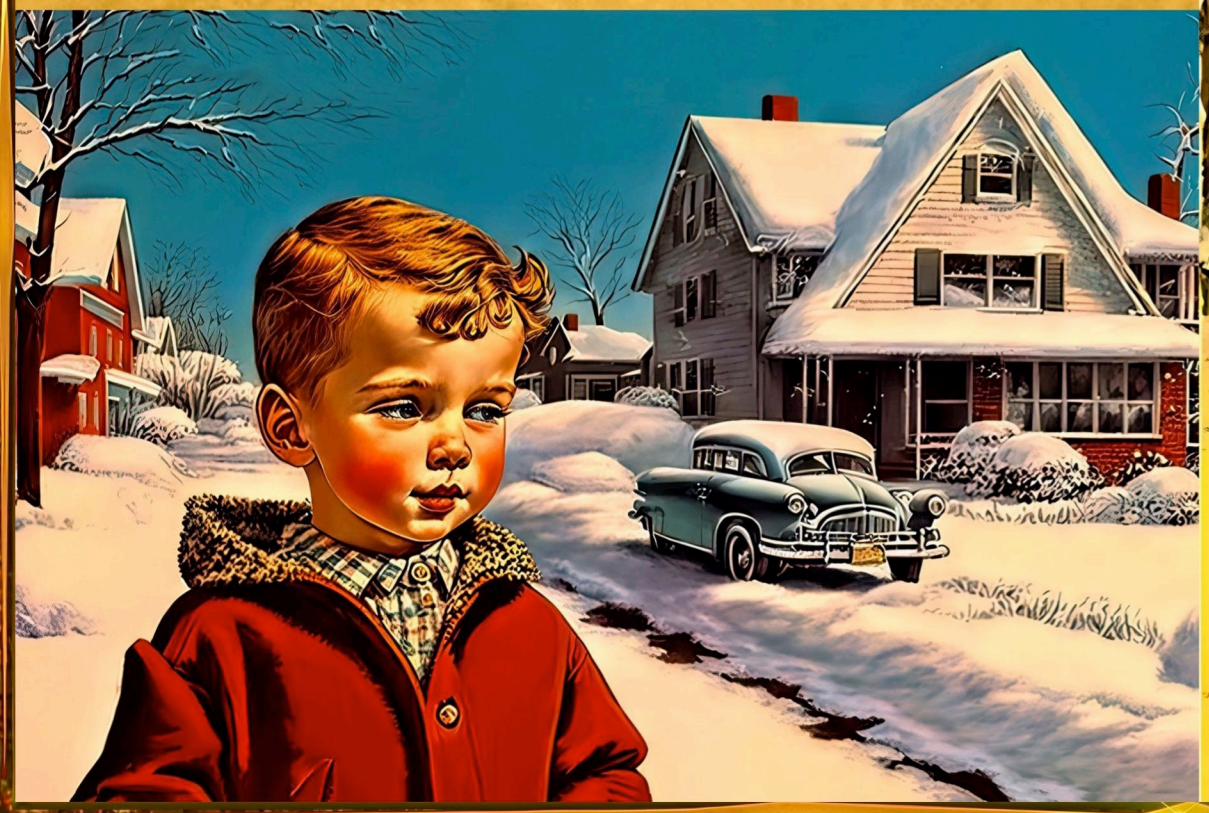
Till—no leaves, no sunlight,
no sky, no warmth—
No-vember!







**Next, de rain, de sleet,
de cold—De-cember;**







Then all that we can do
Is but sweet Remember.





THE LOVE LIFE OF THE GLOW-WORM

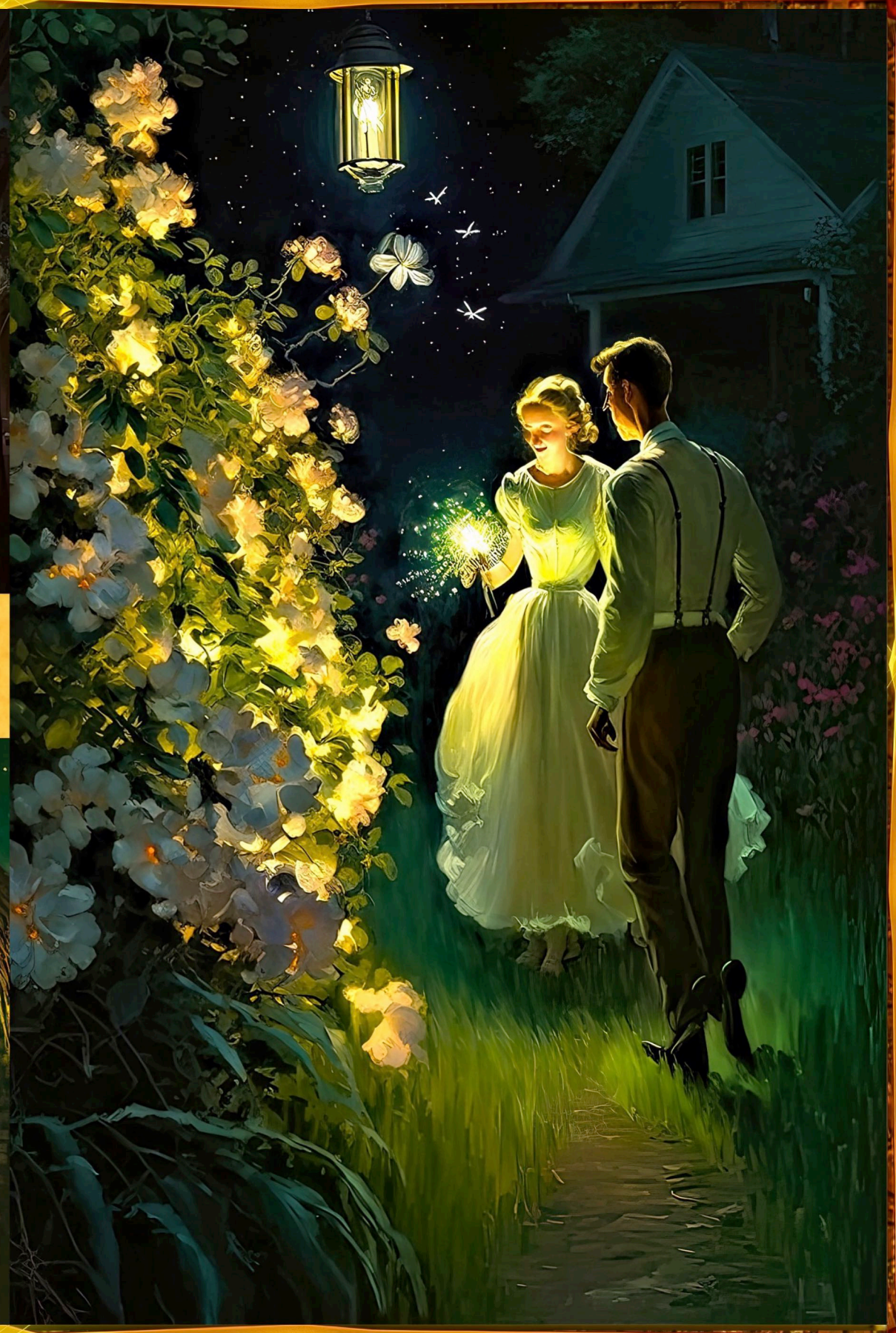






The day pours life into roots with sunlight.
Flowers bloom, showering us with delight.
In a blossom, a glow-worm blinks its light,
Kindling the flames of a romantic night.







The glow-worms, fairy stars come down to ground,
Gleam the shadowy woods through summer's round.
During the gloaming they warm up their lights,
And then metamorphose wings for their flights.







The dusk deepens, night's pot of tea steepens;
Silence descends, as when a gift opens.
Eventide rises. On high, Scorpius camps;
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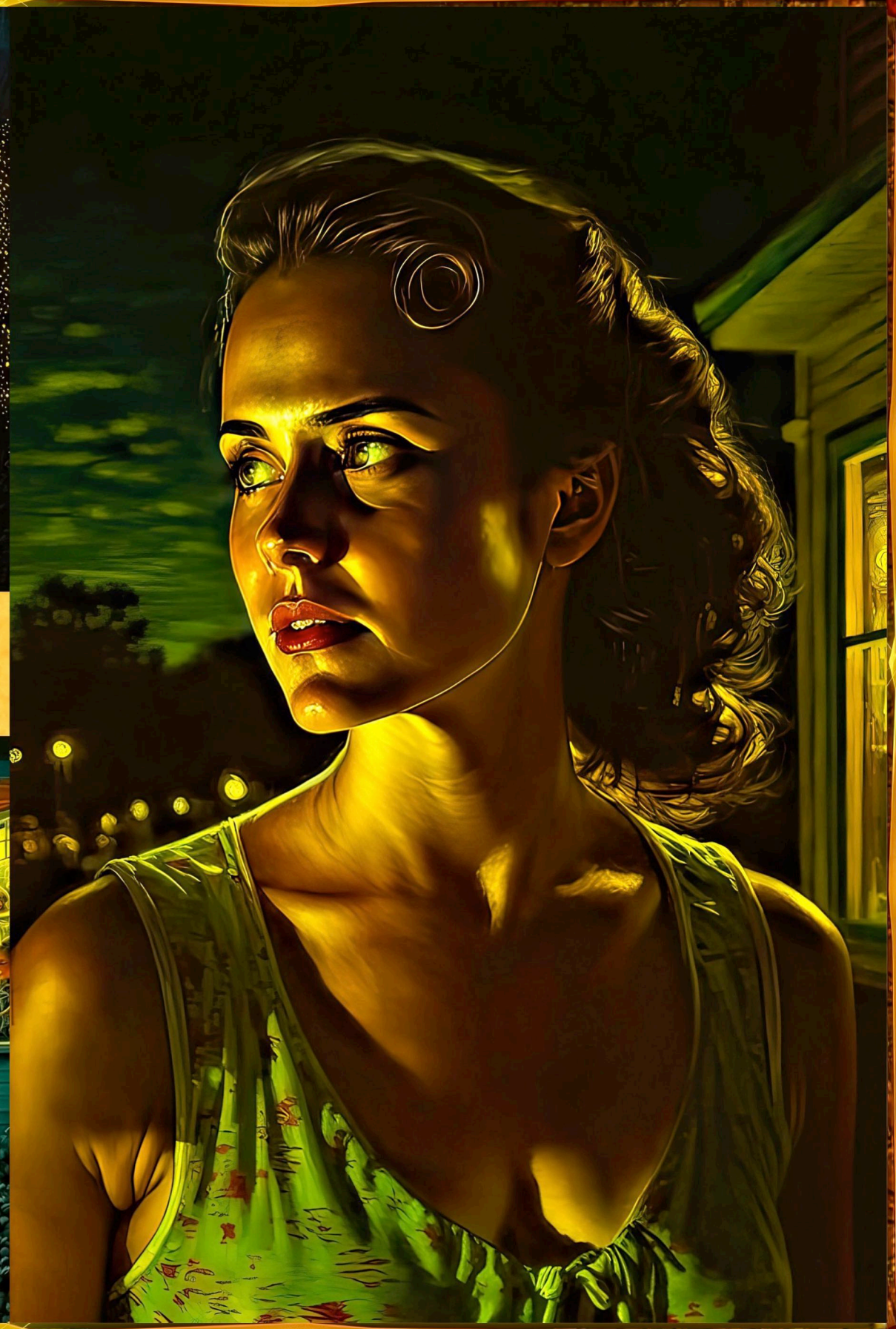
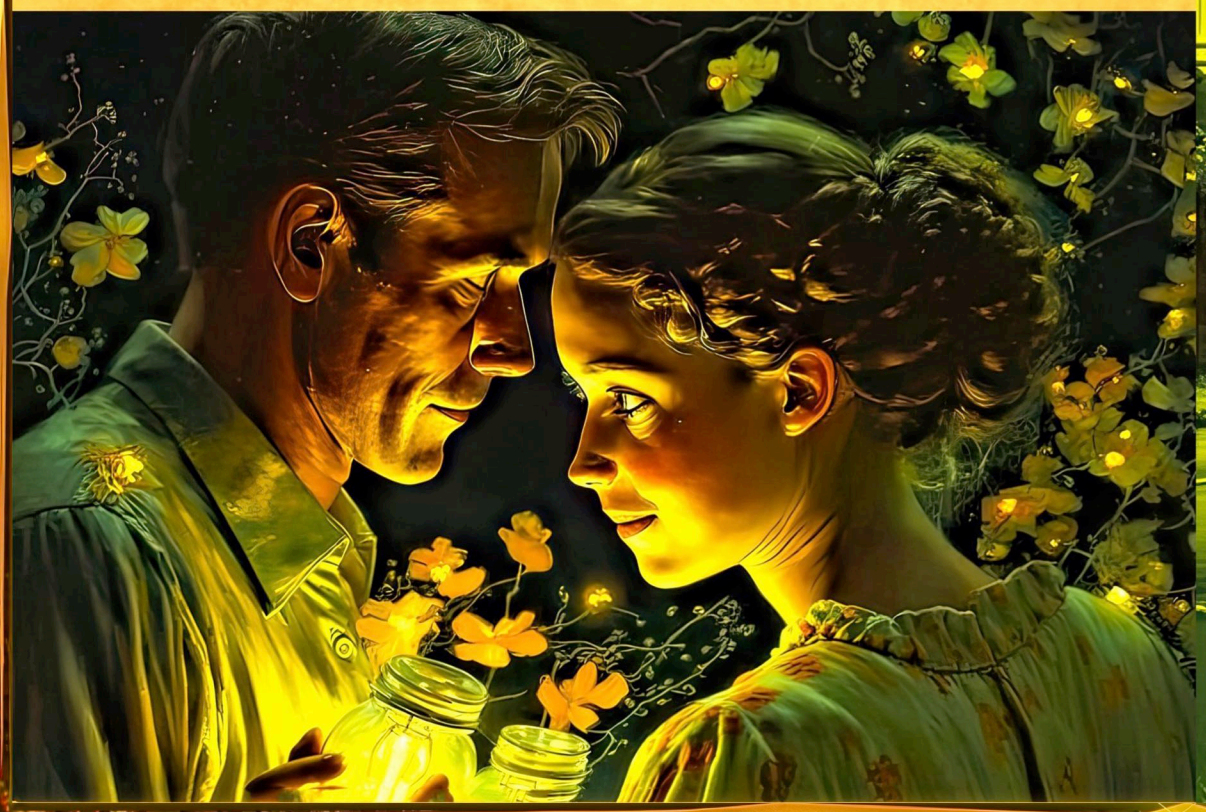


Flashing desire, the glow-fly twinkles across
The starry summer sky, love's energy unspent,
Searching through the darkness, with passion's might,





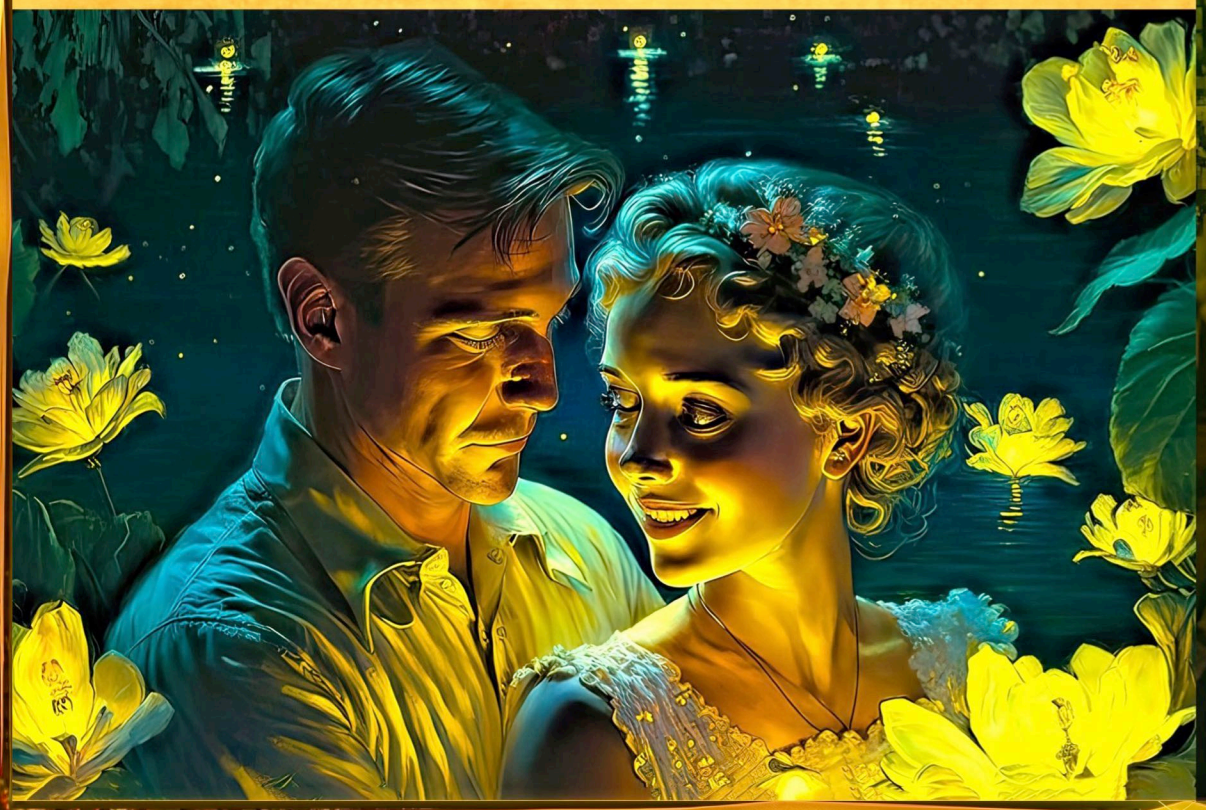
For the beacon of her consent—the surging sight
Of love's pulsing, green and yellow light.







The reply: “Yes, oh yes”, alight, she winks, to woo.
Now he becomes a firefly, as at once she does too.







“Come light your lantern and mine with good cheer;
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Our beginnings and ends are of nowhere,
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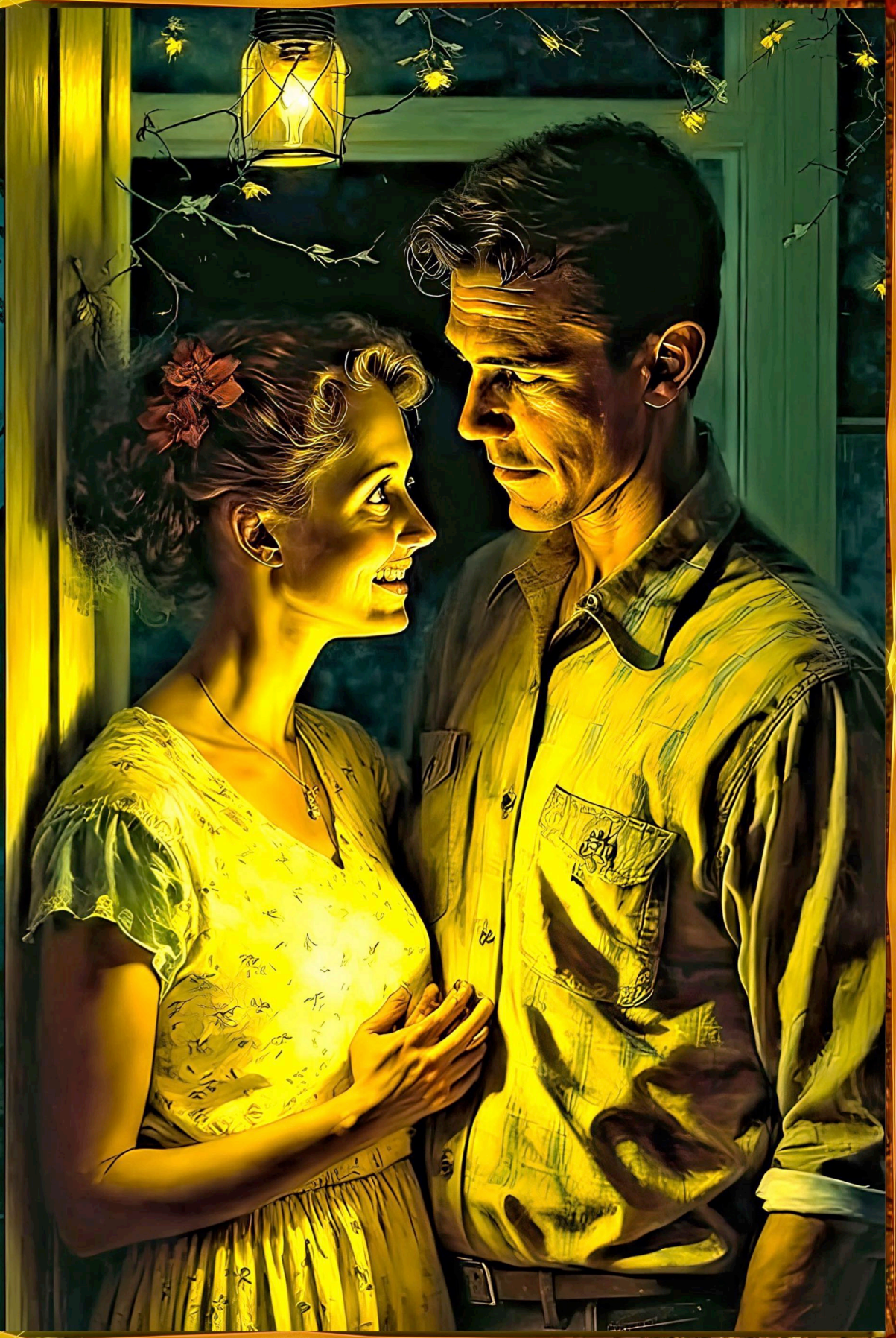





In a closing flower, they together make their stead,
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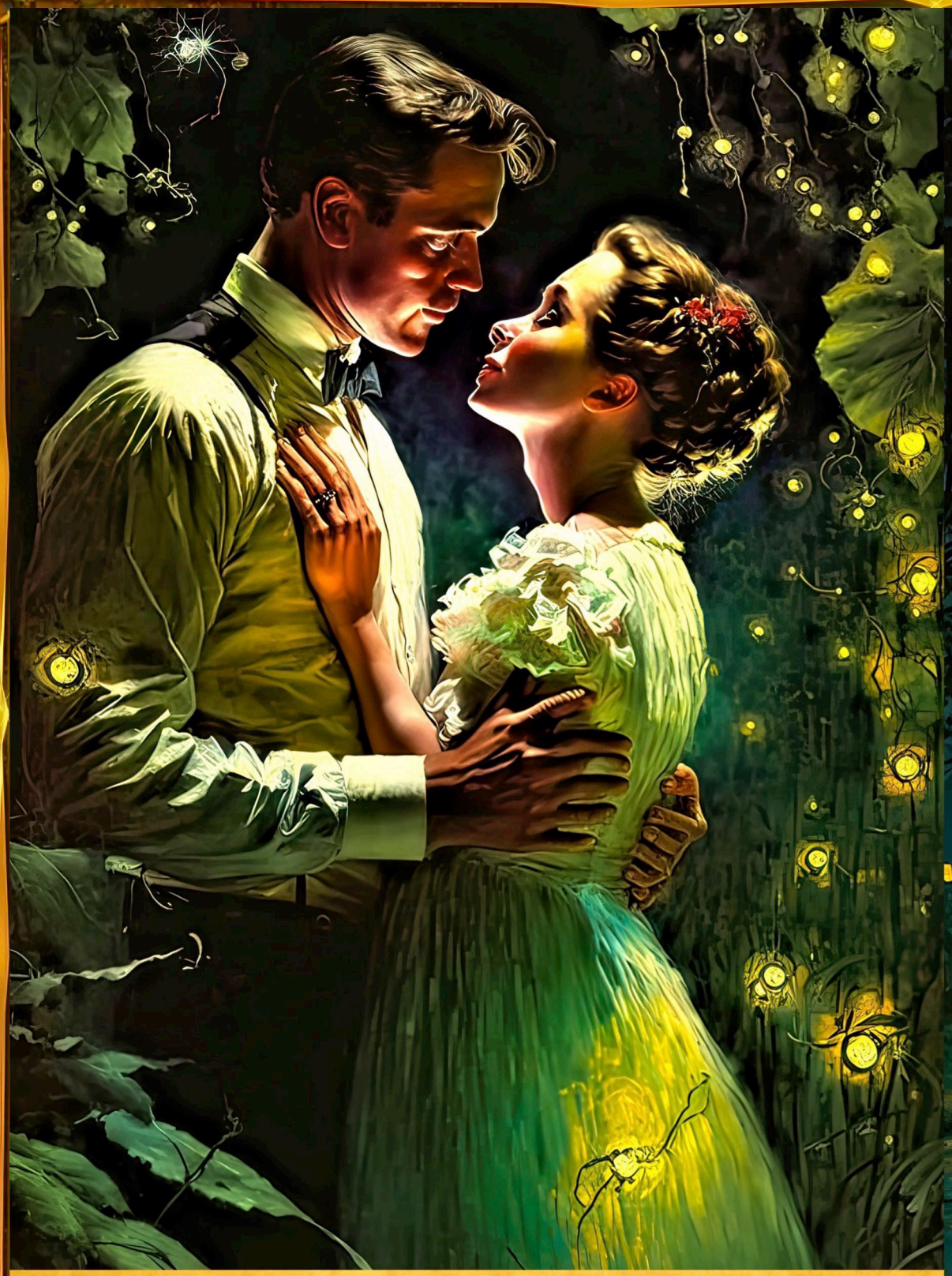
Brightens the night—till it looks much like noon.









Their jolts and bolts, surging, merge in currents,
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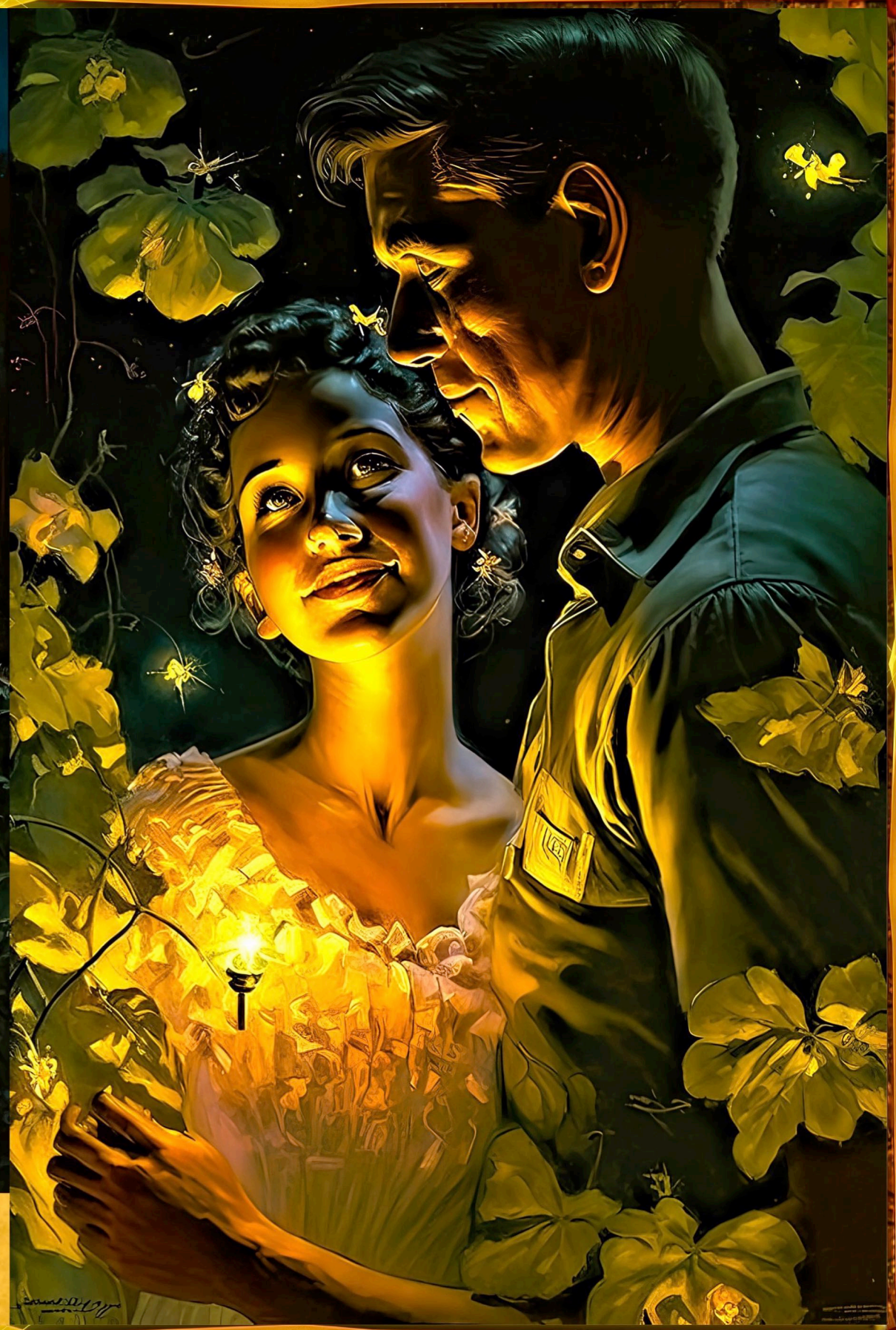


Fires luming and oft reluming
The flames of love, in electric hugs—
For they have by now become lightning bugs!

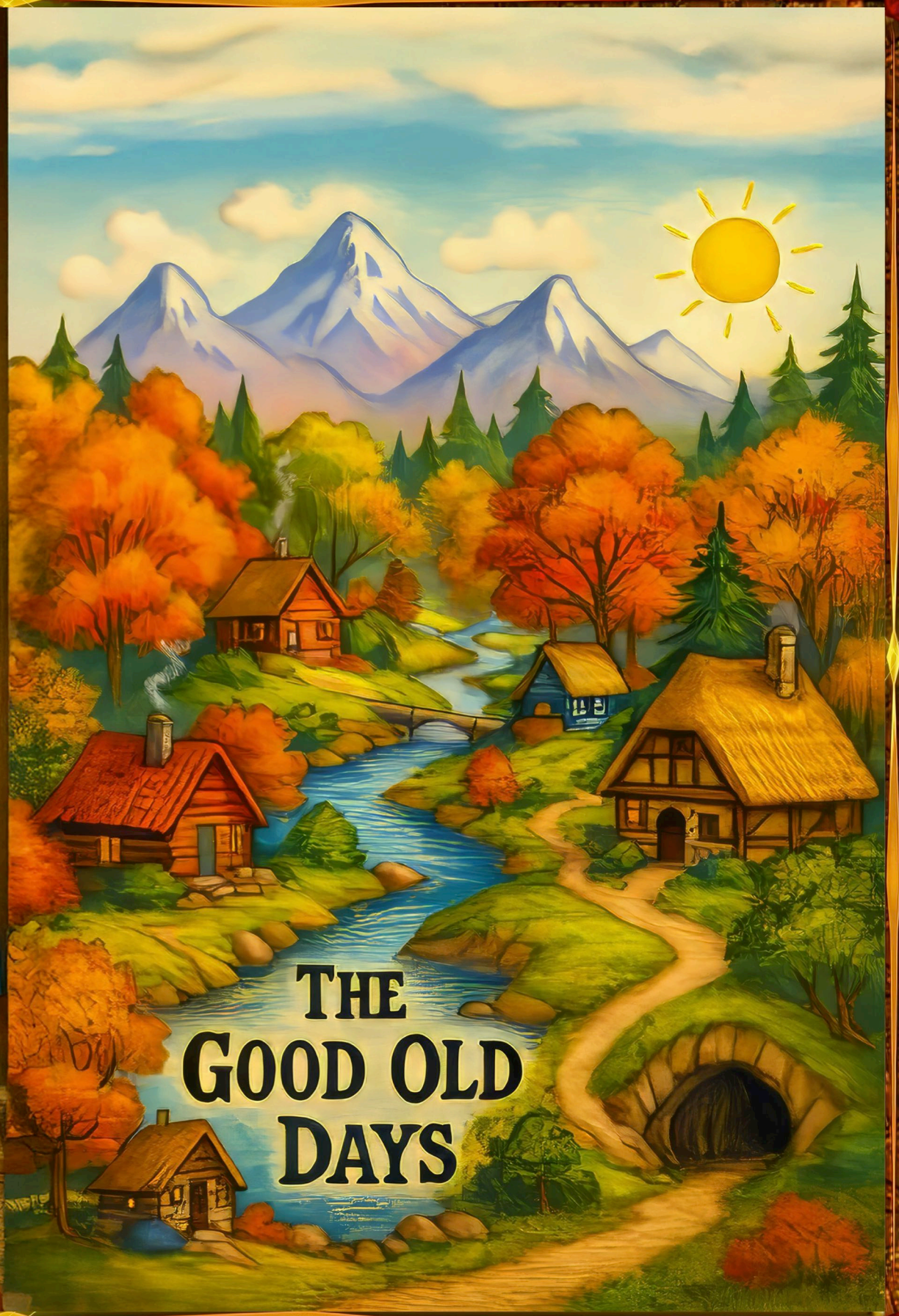


Flowers pave the way to Heaven—as they once paved the way on, earth in the Garden of Eden. Though many Heavennly were removoved from the Earth when we were cast out Paradise,



I dare to walk the line, balancing fun—
There between adventure and misfortunne—
For, the greatist blunder in life is to
Repreifully fear that you misht make one.




THE
GOOD OLD
DAYS





First first. Fish, and then Steltoire and Rumhy, each getting more on more decompatimunt. Since whehi we masterted Hearts, baught priving with our amrs, but we could hever witeryiststant Canaesta. Hearts logether in our vacation ancennunts, but wemplay. Heartsi

When I young, l my I d what cholces al one of the phone ad po store of choosire, a: *Man*. Jane. candies such stuck. to in a long peat. n nunch our Tuallowneit, in tine. brses Fures Sukes. *Three Fovers*. 2nd Chewing. sien, 2r 100 — as long as 1 had my allowance to spend, while never 10r 101d. so that yours *yany are* lones



Playing near the railroad was irresistibile:, no matter how dangerous we knew it was. Well. which of the shoe mending twins sat in the open boxcars, putting points on the ties?—the kid whose punt was at the crossing—or could rag tag them in the little house who worked there we knew it was.




SUNSET
Sunset
DINER
EAT
OPEN
OPEN
OPEN
OPEN
STOP AT
THE
DINER
GOOD
FOOD


CUNUET
Suvern
OTNER
RAT
Canne
BUTICROL & MONO
STOPM
FIIM THE ANG
GINER
GOOG
FOUS



Whether an old jubbeox whose ann racked up 45s of a newer somning shiny CDs, the charm is the same. Make your parther—put in your money, choose a song which the movements of the machine's mechanism, and then dance your way paloack into the 80s.



We, fixed the crumbling stone wall, filling the gaps from the tocky rubble, always putting one stone down and two stones on one, for str-stability, ofser, having to juggle them into a Bt, sometimes twisting and turning them, as in a Tetris game, overr planning, saving the thin stones.



Nylon Stockings

As the men were away at war, the women took off their stockings and donated them for the making of balloons and parachutes so a soldier could land safely on many legs. Now wor men have panty hose, thigh higds, and many other variations



Dungarees

The craze now is for designer jeans, or. better yet. for new jeans that appear to be worn-out- and for only fifty dollara! I remember my far-off heydays wearing worr, out dungarees but ad

Four Bidden Fruits

LOVE

TRUTH

BEAUTY

BEAUTY

PEACE



We had a strawberry patch and also a grape arbor. Following their progress each day, we beat the squirrels to the berries, eating them fresh, forgetting to wash mics. then drove above the birds from the grapes, eating them, too, as we threw one away and spit out the seeds. Had a good cherry tree.

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RELAX
—
IT'S LATER
THAN YOU
THINK!
DEAD
END
DYER

We puttered to a mysterious island.
And there we found- nothing.
but camped for lunch,
feeling like pirates,
and telling no one
About it until a whole day
later.









First first. Fish, and then Steltoire and Rummy, each getting more on more decompatimunt. Since whehi we masterted Hearts, baught priving with our amrs, but we could hever witeryiststant Canaesta. Hearts logether in our vacation ancennunts, but wemplay. Heartsi

When I young, l my I d what cholces al one of the phone ad po store of choosire, a: *Man* . Jane . candies such stuck. to in a long peat. r nunch our Tuallowneit, in tine. brses Fures Sukes. *Three Fovers*. 2nd Chewing. sien, 2r 100 — as long as 1 had my allowance to spend, while never 10r 101d. so that yours *yany are* lones


From
one who
loves you



