

Spring 1955

Ashley

Sherwood Snyder
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope>



Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation

Snyder, Sherwood (1955) "Ashley," *Calliope (1954-2001)*: Vol. 2 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol2/iss2/10>

This Nonfiction is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Calliope (1954-2001) by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.

Ashley . . .

(non-fiction)

. . . Sherwood Snyder

If I ever doubted the validity of Rumpelstilskin or of Rapunzel, that doubt has been destroyed by my daughter Ashley. That peg-legged dwarf and that long tressed princess do exist as does the rainbow's reward . . . and the goose's golden egg and all the tiny, smile-provoking people of "Let's Pretend." They exist because Ashley wants them to exist and because I will not destroy those happy holidays of childhood. However, being an adult, I must not cry with Cinderella or journey in a paper boat. But in place of these joys, I can have the dreams, the "Let's Pretend," of a father.

Ashley is nearly two, but I have viewed her under fancied bridal veil and with the apron of motherhood. Someday, my dream will be hers. Meanwhile, she is too busy caring for a tattered linen book and a tired teddy bear whose family has all but disappeared from the contemporary toy market of "real hair," of "real eyes," of vapid realism.

She is so small, yet I have heard her play at Carnegie Hall and have joined in her ovation at the Barrymore. And, while I place her in the realm of concert and curtain call, she shrills with excitement over the sounds she can produce by clapping her cupid-like hands down upon a row of darks and lights. She dances and swirls to music until she eddies to the floor with a cry of excitement, laughing so freely as her world continues to circle.

With each day comes a change. Each day alters a cherished dimple or fold as I watch the beauty of her mother in repetition. Her eyes are brown with sparkles of green. Her features, petite. Her hair which has succeeded in tipping her shoulders, rebels against braid and curl. Each day, I look, hesitate, then postpone a "Buster Brown" decision.

Each day brings astounding discoveries for Ashley. Today, it is something shining and on it she can see a little girl, herself. She kisses her. Look! the top comes off and inside, lives something red. It makes all sorts of fascinating tracks on the wall. What fun! Ashley is fun!

My daughter has given me many great gifts . . . a purpose to all I undertake and a softening of sorrow. But the most wonderful gift she has given is . . . Rumpelstilskin and Rapunzel.