Winter 1955

Some Good

Margaret Perry
Western Michigan University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Perry, Margaret (1955) "Some Good," Calliope: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.
Available at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/calliope/vol2/iss1/6

This Fiction is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Calliope by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
He couldn't remember exactly when he began to hate his brother. It must have been when his mother was pregnant. The fellows used to tease him whenever she wasn't around, call her fatty and stick their stomachs out. Then Herbie was born and that was the last time he ever saw his mother alive. She had died in childbirth and that was all he could remember, except he loved her an awful lot and she had died. But Herbie had lived and he hated him for that. It was when he first saw Herbie that he knew he really hated him.

"William," called his father. He was looking for him in the living room.

"Out here, pop," he answered. William was sitting on the old swing on the front porch. The hinges squeaked and the whole swing moved unevenly. It had been that way for years now.

"William, don't you want your allowance?" asked his father as he came on the porch. He was a tall man, not very old but he looked older than he was. He had loved her too and things just weren't the same for him since she had died. He pushed back his thick hair with a strong, tanned hand. "Have you forgotten what day this is, William?"

"I guess so, pop. Gee, it's hot, isn't it?" He looked into his father's sad, brown eyes for a moment and then took the money.

"Why don't you go to a movie?" asked his father. "You can take Herbie, if you want to."

William looked down at his money and clenched his fists. He leaned back so that his stomach slumped and began to swing back and forth. He felt the staring eyes of his father on him.

"I'll give you money for him if that's bothering you." His father stood up and turned around to look in the street. "Where is Herbie, anyway? He should stay nearer home." His father squinted his eyes as he looked down the street, past the neat row of frame houses.

"I don't know, pop." William averted his eyes to his warm, brown feet. He had long toes that were all nearly even. Only the little toes were short. Herbie had round, stubby toes William remembered. He was tall with dreamy eyes, but everything about Herbie was rotund. His short neck and short body reminded William of the species of puffin he had read about in school. Herbie had the face of a cherub.
someone had once said. William hated Herbie that very moment. The color rose in his face and he clenched his fist tighter.

“That money's going to melt away if you don't let go of it,” said his father jokingly. He sat down again and rubbed a damp hand over his wet brow. “What are you going to buy for Herbie's birthday, William? You don't need to spend much on him. A fella his age doesn't care much what you buy him.”

Again William felt the staring eyes of his father on him. His father wanted to know what he was going to buy Herbie. “I don't know what to buy, pop. I'll think of something.” His father smiled and leaned back in the chair with closed eyes. That was answer enough, thought William. Every year it had been the same struggle and every year he had finally found something for Herbie. Whatever he gave Herbie, he liked it. Herbie was easy to please. But still William hated him. It was as if he ate something that didn't agree with him, took medicine, and then felt all right again. That was the way his hate affected him. He didn't hate Herbie all the time, just sometimes. But the illness was always there, ever recurring to make William sick with hate. Every year Herbie was a year older, it meant their mother was dead another year. Soon it would be four years. Instead, the time seemed equal to William's fourteen years. He stood up to go. “I think I will go to a movie, pop. I'll take Herbie another time.”

He walked slowly with his hands dug deep into his pants pockets. He could feel the movement of his slender thighs beneath the rough denim material. The heat filled sidewalk burned his bare feet as he trudged on toward the business section. He was only a block away when he heard voices; young, angry voices. They came from the Millers' high, front yard hedges.

“Leggo of my sailboat,” cried the little voice. “Leggo. It's mine.” He began to cry.

“Aw, shud up,” said the older voice. “You can't sail a boat on a day like this. It might burn up.” He laughed.

Another small voice cried in defense. “Give us the boat, you bully. I'm going to tell my daddy.”

“Leggo . . . leggo,” cried the first voice. He was crying loudly now, almost convulsively.

William recognized the voice and started to go on. But when he heard the screaming voice cry, “my brother gave it to me,” he stopped. He listened afterwards and all he could hear were the heartbreaking, convulsive sobs of the little boy. Then the older boy came walking on to the outer sidewalk.
“Hey,” called William.

Ten year old Dickey Miller turned toward him “Yeah. Whadda ya want?” He swaggered as he spoke.

William walked slowly over to Dickey and stood directly in front of him, two inches away. “Give me the boat,” said William very quietly.

“Go away,” Dickey shoved William to one side and began walking in the opposite direction. Herbie and his little friend stood at the edge of the sidewalk, still in the Miller yard.

William looked at the quickly retreating figure of Dickey Miller. William felt the four little eyes staring on him. Herbie’s eyes glistened. William ran and tackled Dickey at his waist, making him fall on the warm, hard sidewalk. “I said give me the boat,” repeated William in a high screaming voice. He held Dickey on the ground, pinioning him at the shoulder blades. Dickey released the boat but William did not let loose. Herbie ran up and picked the boat up off the ground. “Don’t you ever let me catch you bothering him again,” said William angrily. Then he released Dickey and stood up with a tense, jerky movement. Inside him he could feel the pounding of his heart which sounded like the quiet rapping of drums in a parade. He relaxed, dug his hands into his pockets, and began slowly walking in the direction he had first started. He felt a little sick inside, the way he had felt the time before Dr. Jordan had given him an enema. Still it was different. It was as if he didn’t hate Herbie at all. It was as if he really loved him. My brother gave it to me. He could still hear the little voice, high and hurt, screaming for the toy his brother had given him. William felt a surging inside and all the sickness went away. He even felt a small breeze.

“Willyum.” It was Herbie’s voice. The small, chubby figure ran up to his brother and hugged his arm. “Gee Willyum, that was sure some good.”

William looked into the round, smiling face and hugged it against his slender thighs. “Yeah, Herbie, it was sure some good.”